DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 417 PS 021 880

AUTHOR Shaham, Dan
TITLE Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education: Self & Social Perceptions.
PUB DATE 24 May 91
NOTE 166p.; M.S. Thesis, Bank Street College of Education.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care; Ethnography; *Males; Parent Attitudes; Preschool Education; *Preschool Teachers; *Self Concept; Sex Differences; Social Cognition; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Male Faculty

ABSTRACT

Noting that men make up only a small percentage of early childhood and day care educators, a study was conducted to assess male teachers' points of view and attitudes. The self- and social-perceptions of 5 male preschool teachers between the ages of 22 and 50 were determined through ethnographic interviews. It was found that, as a group, the male teachers exhibited high levels of individualism, motivation, social awareness, and non-materialism. Four of the five had previous experience in other professions but decided to enter the preschool teaching profession because they enjoyed teaching. All five said that they were accepted by their female counterparts and rarely clashed with female teachers on non-professional matters. All five reported a period of adjustment to working with young children, and sensed that many children, especially girls, initially were somewhat shy around a male teacher. Three of the five felt socially inferior to many of the parents of the children they taught due to their low salaries. Being accused of being pedophiles and child abusers was the male teachers' greatest fear. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

PS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 366 417

Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education
Self & Social Perceptions

By

Dan Shaham

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dan Shaham

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Advisor: Virginia Casper, PhD.

PS 021830

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Science in Education
Bank Street College of Education
May 24, 1991

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dan Shaham

Abstract

Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education, Self And Social Perceptions

The primary focus of this study was to investigate the male teachers' self and social perception as they were reflected by the teachers themselves.

The sample population consisted of five teachers, ages 22, 30, 35, 41, and 50. All five were working with 2-5 year olds, but only three had worked with 6-24 months olds.

The interviews, conducted according to the Ethnographic method, focused on the teachers' perspectives. The taped interviews were transcribed and analyzed according to the broad headings of Biography, Education, and Gender.

The analysis showed that the male teachers felt accepted by the female teachers, and that tensions between male and female teachers were gender oriented only in a small number of cases.

The male teachers did not see a difference between the activities they initiated and those initiated by female teachers. The differences were in the way the activities were perceived by children, and the different interactions children had with the male teachers.

The male teachers have strong individualistic personalities. They are highly motivated and stay many years in teaching, albeit with low social status and meager salaries.

Table of Contents:

I. Introduction 2

II. Review of the Literature 9

III. Methodology 18

IV. A. Data

- 1. Jack 26
- 2. Charles 50
- 3. Jeff 67
- 4. Leonard 96
- 5. Ron 109

B. Analysis and Discussion 123

V. Summary 153

VI. Bibliography 155

VII. Appendices

- A. Dan's Biography 157
- B. The Submarine 161

Acknowledgements

Writing of the following study would have been impossible without the participation, and encouragement of various people. I want to thank each, and all, for this help.

To Dr. Virginia Casper, my advisor and professor in Bank Street College of Education, who has encouraged and directed this study, and who, through the busy years in Bank Street, has lent a helping hand in good times, and especially in some lousy ones.

To Dr. Avima Lombard, my professor of Early Childhood Education in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who planted the seed of love for the field, and who, through the years, has continuously encouraged and guided my studies.

To Mr. Larry Greene, a life long educator, for his wise advice, and deep insights into the role of male teachers.

To Mrs. Barbara Matzner, and Mr. John Gray, who have gone through the manuscript and gave invaluable remarks in matters of language and style.

To the five informants, Jack, Charles, Jeff, Leonard, and Ron. Their enthusiasm, openness, and courage to touch the most sensitive aspects of their lives, were the most valuable contributions to this study. Their stories were so touching, that they can stand, each and all, as remarkable narratives by themselves.

And, to my wife, Tal Klausner, who spent nights on transcribing the tapes, typing the study, and endlessly correcting me. Without her assistance, this paper would have been ready sometime in the fourth quarter of the twenty first century.

I. Introduction

A. Statement - Background of the Problem:

When my professor in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, recommended Bank Street College of Education, as one of the best schools in the field, neither of us saw that I would be the sole male student in The Infant and Parent Development Program. This program focuses on 0-3 year olds, and it was only natural, after a year and a half of teaching, as a sole male teacher in a Day Care Center, that I would start looking for my lost male colleagues. I was curious to know if they existed at all, and if they did, what were they feeling as male teachers working with young children, from birth to 3 years of age.

It took real detective work, with the help of the best professionals (educators) in Manhattan, to locate the lost tribe. But alas, they were not teaching 0-3. They had done it in the past, (if at all), but had eventually moved to teaching older children of 2-5.

Therefore, I had no choice but to proscribe the designated title of "Male Teachers in 0-3", and to replace it with "Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education".

B. Rationale for the Study

When I started researching the topic of male teachers, who teach children of zero to three years old, I found that "at grade three and below, less than two percent of teachers are male ... In contrast, in the secondary level 53.7% of the teachers were men during 1970-1971." (Wolinsky 1974, p.4) (1). Robinson (1978, p.854) writes that nation-wide, men comprise only 4% of the total numbers of workers in Day Care Centers. Ayers (1989, p.4) says that 2% of teachers in preschool are male.

The figures made me think of doing a research on this rare species. I thought the research should give some sense of male teachers of very young children; where they come from, why are they teaching very young children, how they perceive themselves, and, how they feel they are perceived by society, children, teachers, parents, and friends?

C. Methodology

While conducting the research I had two main goals. The first was to serve as an instrument for the unheard voices of the male teachers (2). The second was to understand the male teachers' point of view. As William Ayers puts it: "It is to individual teachers that we ultimately turn in order to understand teaching" (Ayers, p.5).

The research I had in mind was ethnographic in character. In order to conduct the research, I used James Spradley's (1979) "The Ethnographic Interview". As will be explained in part III, I conducted only the first, out of at least three interviews, that Spradley describes in his method of compiling an ethnography. The

---

1. Lee & Wolinsky (1973) is the article which summarized Wolinsky's (1974) unpublished dissertation.
2. Ayers, p.3: "the voices of pre-school teachers are even less heard than those of teachers."

term itself needs a brief explanation.

Ethnography, according to Spradley, means learning from people. The essence of ethnography is to be taught by the people (Spradley 1979, pp.3-4). The primary focus of Spradley's ethnographic interview is to understand "cultural meanings systems" (Ibid, p.7). The ethnographic interview focuses exclusively on what the people say, although the ethnographer in his work uses three main sources. The first is what people say. The second is the way people act, and the third is the artifacts that people use (Ibid p.8).

The ethnographer tries to the best of her/his ability, to find out how a specific group of people define the world. Ethnography tries not to impose the researcher's own theories, but rather to learn the world of the people as it is reflected through their eyes. In order to avoid bias as much as possible, Spradley uses self introspection as a tool. The researcher makes an introspective journal of his own biases, in order to confront what he has found with what he has in mind (1).

The questions I used in the interview are what Spradley calls Descriptive Questions. They are purposely broad and lead to broad answers. The questions were used as general guidelines. Their use was according to the informants's character, and the specific course of each interview. Five informants were located and interviewed. Except for the first informant, Jack, who is a close friend, I did not know the other informants. All of them work with

---

1. The use of introspection as a professional tool is found with the following educators as well: Dorothy W. Gross, Selected Presentations, p.3, William Ayers The Good Preschool Teacher, pp.13, 145.

young children. All five teachers are currently working with 2-5 year olds, and three teachers had worked with 6-24 months old. Four are white, and one is hispanic. Their ages range from 22 to 50, with a median age of 36, and average age of 38.4. Their average period of work in Early Childhood Education is 7.9 years. All are working in Manhattan.

I recorded the interview with each teacher. Each interview lasted at least two hours. The tapes were transcribed, and all names, including colleges and small towns, were changed. Each of the teachers received a final copy of this paper and the transcription of his interview.

The transcriptions (the data) were analyzed according to broad headings: Biography, Education, and Gender. The analysis of these broad headings was a result of the stated purpose of the research, which basically asked three major questions; who are the male teachers; how do they perceive their social interactions in the field of Education; and what are the issues that single them out as male teachers in a female dominated profession. The broad headings were analyzed according to subjects. That is, under the heading of education relationships with teachers, children, and parents were explored. Each interview was summarized, and a comparative analysis of the informants followed. The analysis of the data included two major elements. The first was an analysis of the identical and idiosyncratic themes which had been found in the interviews The second was a comparison of the themes with the literature.

The research was regarded as a pioneering one. It was aimed at focusing our attention on the broad issues that the male teachers brought up. A future in-depth research will focus the investigation and choose specific topics from the broad range of the present investigation.

The research focused on interviews of the teachers, and its main concern was the personal and social perspectives as reflected through the teachers' eyes. The research did not include any direct observation, and was not evaluative with regard to the teaching itself. Although the research used part of the ethnographic method, it was not meant to be an ethnography in the sense of describing the whole culture of male teachers. Rather, I chose to focus on self and social conceptions as they were reflected by the teachers. In other words, the research focused mainly on what these male teachers think and feel, rather than study the whole aspects of their lives as it is done in an ethnography. The research was limited to a small number of teachers. It does not claim to portray the typical figure of the male teacher in Early Childhood Education, but means to have an in-depth look at the thoughts and feelings of a few teachers.

D. Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

As mentioned above, the personal introspection of the researcher is an intrinsic part of the research process. Therefore, I offer my biases here, up front (1).

---

1. See also Appendix I, Dan's Biography.

It is only with children of 24 months and above, that I found the framework of the Day Care Center, as it exists, to be suitable for the work of education. The existing number of teachers, even in the best Day Care Centers, makes it impossible for the teacher to focus on small groups (of three children at the most) as she/he should do. The result is that the children do not get enough individual attention, and they meet too many caregivers. From 24 months and above, the children's capabilities enable them to be in larger groups. The Group Care is then, not only more natural to the children, but also in better proportion to the available number of teachers.

The central issue I found myself grappling with during the first year of working with infants and toddlers in Early Childhood Education, was to find my place, as a man, in a female dominated profession. This was not a simple issue at all, because I had been working in more gender-balanced professions. I finally found what I regard as a good balance. I work part time with children, and most of the time is devoted to an academic career in the direction of Educational Psychology. The combination makes it possible to keep in touch with the children, teachers, and parents, on the one hand, and to work in a socially agreeable and financially rewarding position, on the other hand. As one who earned two and three times what I earn in Child Care, I found the frustration unbearable. I do believe, with all my heart, that men should be in the field; but just like women, they should not be punished financially, nor should they be assigned a bottom rung on the social ladder.

When I started contemplating a man's special contribution to young children, I quickly found a simple answer: it is natural, and it is the way it should be. The same answer applies to the question of why there are men and women to begin with. The sad reality in education is that the younger the children, the fewer men there are. This represents a shift from what I regard as the ideal setting of equilibrium, where a child should get both female and male influences.

Prior to commencing the first interviews, I speculated that the main issue of male teachers in Early Childhood Education would be the tensions between male and female teachers. As the interviews unfolded, I was relieved to find that I was wrong. The results evolved around the gender issue, but in a different, unexpected, and reassuring way.

II. Review of the Literature

Wolinsky (1974), Robinson & Canaday (1978), and Robinson (1979) all point out that little is actually known about male teachers in Early childhood Education. Close examination of the above research shows that below age 2, there is actually no research at all. One possible reason is that Day Care is a new field for men (Robinson 1979, p.279). Another evident reason is that so few men are in the field.

Wolinsky (1974) and Robinson & Canaday (1978), observed male teachers in class and interviewed them, but there is no ethnographic research. Ayers conducted an ethnographic study of six female teachers in Pre-School, but there is no counterpart of such work with male teachers. Nevertheless, even the small quantity of research that we do have, is highly valuable. It portrays the main issues found in male teachers' work in the classroom, and serves as an important reference for any future investigation.

The interviews with the five male teachers provided numerous topics. Out of these, I chose to concentrate on two which often over-lap. The first is sex-role and social attitude, and the second is behavior in class, and personality.

Sex Role and Social Attitude

Skeen et al, who deal with the attitude of professional female educators towards men in Early Childhood Education, cite Seifert as the one who indicates the most important fact about the male educators in Early Childhood. Seifert writes (p.229): "In theory most people favor increasing their numbers, but in practice many of us do not really welcome particular real men when they actually express an interest in working with young children". Skeen et al explain this attitude by noting that men in Early Childhood Education contradict sex-role conventions (p.723). Teti & Lamb summarize the basic attitudes in the following (pp 23-24): "Traditionally, family work has been sharply divided according to sex, with males the primary breadwinners and females relegated to domestic functions. The breadwinner role has traditionally been considered one of **the** most important if not the most important measure of masculinity in American society... Even when both parents share the breadwinning role, however, family status is often determined primarily by the father's occupational status."

In their research, Skeen et al (1986) have found, that "classroom teachers/other respondents with direct child contact, and administrators were significantly more stereotyped in their attitudes toward the suitability of male preschool teachers than were college professors/researchers." This means that there was an initial rejection (by female educators who had not worked previously with male teachers) of the introduction of male teachers into the field. Yet, the encouraging and most consistent finding was that women, who had prior work experience with male teachers, were less stereotypical in their attitude than women who had no prior work experience with male teachers (pp.727-728). The findings pinpoint the main problem: there is an initial rejection of the male teacher, which is changed only after male teachers "prove" themselves to be suitable for their unusual choice.

Robinson (1979) found that of the twenty male teachers that he studied, "more than one half reported experiencing conflict with women in their working environment because of their maleness" (p.290). Eleven percent of the female teachers in his study felt that Day Care was not the place for men (p.291). The disparity in the males' and females' reports may indicate, that the males, as a minority, felt even more rejected than they actually were.

The stereotypes of society are very hard to change. Therefore, Teti & Lamb, who discuss society in general, or Skeen et al, and Robinson, who describe specific populations of educators, actually point to the same issue: there is suspicion and mistrust, which exist even under expressed acceptance (1).

The term that is often heard, when defining teaching in Early Childhood, is that it is "woman's work" (Milgram & Sciarra, p.274, Ayers, p.135, Robinson, p.54) (2).

Ayers, p.135 notes that "the low status of teaching is in part a result of the fact that it is women's work, which is

---

1. Milgram and Sciarra, p.245: "What the authors have recently learned through interviews with a small number of men teachers, however, is that the acceptance of the male teacher into the preschool is only an intellectual acceptance, and like the black PhD., his acceptance is devoid, in many cases of sincerity, understanding, and friendliness."
2. I first heard the term from my friend, Jack, who appears in this study, and I admit that it still makes me furious. It was also Jack, who, in his interview, made the remark which succinctly contradicts the "women's work" definition: "It's not woman's work, it's human work."

systematically devalued in our society." Ayers who portrays female teachers, draws our attention to the double passage that male teachers are doing; first, they do "women's work", and second, they are low paid and hence fail to fulfill their sex role as breadwinners (Teti & Lamb, p.299).

In addition to the social taboos, which historically banned men from the field (Robinson 1981, p.27; Robinson 1988, p.54), a fear of child abuse resurrected the old prejudices. "Headline news on several gruesome child abuse cases has intensified the image of men in Day Care work as somehow unnatural" (Robinson, 1988, p.57). As Robinson notes, this led to a renewal of rejection of men in the field, which was fueled by fears shared by educators and parents alike.

Behavior in Class and Personality

Robinson & Canaday (1978) set forth two goals for their work: the first was to check sex-role behaviors, and the second was to check personality traits of male teachers in Early Childhood. The research studied a random sample of 20 male caregivers, 20 male engineers, and 20 female caregivers. The research found that the male caregivers reinforced children more for feminine behaviors (but no significant differences were found in this respect with the female teachers) than masculine behaviors. It also found that "The personalities of the male caregivers corresponded to the feminine direction of their female counterparts, but they were not significantly more feminine than the male engineers." (p.853).

Robinson & Canaday offer two possible explanations for the reinforcement of "feminine" behaviors. The first is that because male caregivers adopted a feminine sex role, their behaviors would resemble those of their female counterparts. Robinson & Canaday regard this adoption of a feminine sex role as a sign of the "positive correlation which exists between masculine and feminine interests and vocational choices." (p.862) (1).

The second explanation is that "masculine" behaviors involve more noise, rough movement and risk of injury, while the "feminine" behaviors allow for order and are less risk related. Overall, the research found similarity between the behaviors and personality of female and male caregivers (pp.862-863) (2).

Seventy percent of the male caregivers entered Day Care "Because of altruistic concerns about the nature of the job itself." (p.862). Altruism is associated with the feminine role in our society, while the cognition focus of the engineers, characterizes the male's role (p.863). "The cross-sex typed personality enabled the male caregiver to comfortably perform the task of caring for

---

1. Nowadays, such a statement about this correlation sounds a bit off-beat, since the definitions of feminine and masculine professions are changing. Women today are police officers, army officers, lawyers, accountants, and astronauts. The sex-role images of professions are changing. It is worth noting that the vocational research that Robinson & Canaday mention is from 1936, 1943, and 1959 (Robinson & Canaday, 1979, p.862)
2. "Research has indicated a similarity between males and females in early childhood education on a number of significant factors: attitudes toward their work... attitudes toward children... personality traits... and sex role behaviors toward children..." (Skeen et al, 1986, p.728).

children" (p.862). The same, in the context of the masculine side, is said about women who choose traditionally masculine occupations such as managerial positions (Ibid).

In his follow-up study, two years after his first one, Robinson (1979) conducted telephone interviews with the 20 male caregivers, 20 female caregivers, and 20 engineers, whom he had initially researched. The main finding was that "79 percent of men in Day Care relocated in human service jobs" (p.279). Robinson reported that the male teachers were the most transient. Seventy percent of them moved into a different work setting and different status, while only 35% of the women, and none of the engineers made a such change (1).

The male teachers gave intrinsic reasons for remaining in the field (e.g. enjoyment of working with children, watching children learn, grow, and develop; preparation and skills for being a better husband). The female teachers gave intrinsic and extrinsic reasons (e.g. staff relation, independence in planning, and fringe benefits). "Humanistic factors and the human element seem to have the crucial appeal for the men in this study" (p.291). Robinson notes that the men who have chosen to care for young children are unique in the sense that "they do not seem interested in getting ahead as men in more "masculine" jobs, like engineering. They have

---

1. The main reasons for male teachers to leave the Day Care were poor salary and no opportunity for advancement. Seventy percent of the male teachers were married, and eighty five percent claimed they were heads of households. Seventy five percent had one child or more. The mean age of male teachers was 30.2 (Robinson 1979, p.288).

chosen their jobs for the intrinsic personal value" (p.292). Robinson (p.291) notes that his findings are congruent with Holland, who states that men and women chose their jobs according to their personality traits. In Robinson's studies, the main traits were a wish to break down stereotypes and to show children that men can be nurturing, warm, and intimate just as women can. The male teachers were very much aware of sexism, and wanted deliberately to fight sex-role stereotypes (Robinson & Canaday, 1978, p.863) (1).

Wolinsky (1974) compared male teachers to female teachers in 18 classes, where the children's age varied between 3-7 years old. No class had only male teachers. The classes had combinations of Head Teacher and Assistant Teacher of different sexes. Wolinsky's quest was to investigate the impact of male teachers in the classrooms. Her study focused on the differences between the male and female teachers' activities. Wolinsky's procedure included observations of the teachers and students, interviews of 108 selected students, and checking the students' attendance records.

Wolinsky found the following major results:

1. Boys received more disapproval from both male and female teachers.
2. Male teachers were more approving of boys than female teachers.
3. "Male teachers were seen to be reluctant to evaluate their female students" (p.57).

---

1. "Redefining the child care problem means working in all sectors of our society to break down sex-role stereotypes, and to broaden our vision of nurturance as a quality that is fundamentally human, not male, or female." (Levine, 1977, p.61).

4. There was "... strong tendency for teachers to favor children of the same sex in leadership assignments and for male teachers to relate to male typed activities, while female teachers focused on neutral activities" (p.52).
5. The boys strongly perceived themselves as affiliated with the male teacher. The girls expressed more or less equal affiliation with male and female teachers.
6. The male teachers in the sample "seemed to be more reticent... in that they initiated fewer activities in groups. In spite of this reticence, the male teachers appeared to have a masculine influence on classroom activities, to be more balanced in their evaluation of boys, more inclined to give boys leadership positions, and to set up affectionate ties with boys and girls which were often different than those established by the female teachers" (p.52).

Wolinsky explained the pattern of passivity in the male teachers' behaviors in two ways. The first is that the passivity reflects the male teachers' uneasiness in the overwhelmingly female sex-typed position of Early Childhood teacher. The second is that the very young students, more than teachers's positions, make the teacher more reserved. The tiny students might "intimidate" the male teachers, causing them to "overreact and to be too gentle and passive" (p.58).

Robinson and Wolinsky differ in their descriptions of the male teachers' activities vs. the female teachers'. Robinson found no significant difference between the male and female teachers: they both reinforce more feminine activities than masculine ones. Wolinsky found that there was a strong tendency of the male teachers to "relate to male-typed activities, while female teachers focused on neutral activities" (Wolinsky, p.52).

Robinson, and Wolinsky mentioned the passivity, or timidity, of the male teachers in class. They both agreed that the probable explanation is the dominance of the female teachers in the settings of Early Childhood Education.

III. Methodology - Detailed

The interviews included five male teachers who teach in Manhattan. Their ages were 22, 30, 35, 41, and 50 years old. One is married with no children; two are divorced; one of the divorcee's has four children, who stayed with his wife; the other divorcee has one child' who stayed with him. Four are Caucasian, and one is Hispanic. The teachers have the following teaching experience:

Teacher	Age	Students' Age	Years of Teaching	Current Students' Age
Jeff	50	14-16 2.5-6	3 11 14 Total	2.5 - 6
Ron	41	0.5-2 2 3-4 3	2 2 7 3 14 Total	3
Jack	35	1.5-2.7 2-5	1 9 10 Total	5
Leonard	30	2-5 7-18 50-60	3 10(Cello) 10(Tot.Cello)	2-5 7-18(Cello)
Charles	22	1 2	1 0.5 1.5 Total	2

Spradley's method for conducting an ethnographic interview was used in the research. The research made use of the first interview that Spradley portrays in his method. This interview contained descriptive questions which were purposefully broad, so as to give the informants space to tell their own story with the minimum of interruption. The questions were introduced after I explained the purpose and the method of the interview. Special emphasis was placed on the informants' self expression, and on the non-judgmental nature of the research.

The introduction and the questions were the following:

Introduction to the Interview

The interview focuses on you, the teacher. The main goal of the interview is descriptive. I want your point of view, in your own words. The interview is not judgmental in any sense. It is descriptive. It wants you to portray, in your own words, your world as a male teacher in Early Childhood. The interview will help me to have a better understanding of male teachers.

The interview is confidential. Your name, and the names of the people and places will be changed. Copies of the transcript and the final paper will be given to you when the paper is completed.

Questions

1. What were you doing before you started working as a teacher?
2. What caused you to enter the field of teaching?
3. Can you describe the setting in which you worked with the children?
4. Can you describe a typical day of working with the children?
5. How was it to start working with 0-3's? How did you feel with

the children? What responses did you get from them? Can you describe the relations you have with them?

6. How did you feel with the teachers and director? What responses did you get from them? Can you describe the relationships you have with them?
7. How did you feel with the parents? What responses did you get from them? Can you describe the relationships you have with them?
8. Can you describe, (if there is any), the difference between what you are doing in class, and what the female teachers are doing? Do you have different activities, do you have different relationships with the children; teachers; directors; parents, etc...
9. What initiatives of yours can you recollect?
10 Can you describe the reaction of people who knew you, when you told them that you were working with very young children. How did your relatives react? How did your friends, and close friends react? How did you react to the various reactions?
11 Can you describe what causes you joy in work? Satisfaction? Hope?
12 Which age group do you like the most? The infants? The toddlers? What makes you like or dislike a certain age group?
13 What typical activities do you do with each group? What initiatives of yours can you recollect?. What are your favorite activities with the children? What are the least liked activities?

14 Why do you think there are so few men in Early Childhood Education, the younger the children, the fewer the men?

The tapes were transcribed and analyzed separately, according to three broad headings: Biography. Education, and Gender.

The heading of Biography was broken down into the following subjects:

a. Biography, which included all the biographical details as they were mentioned in the interview. At the end of the biography, an overview of the informant was written as an introduction, focusing on the main features of the informant.
b. Support Systems, which included the resources which helped the teacher to cope with the difficulties of his professional choice. The resources could be personal (the teacher's values) and/or external (friends and relatives).

The heading of Education was broken down into the following subjects:

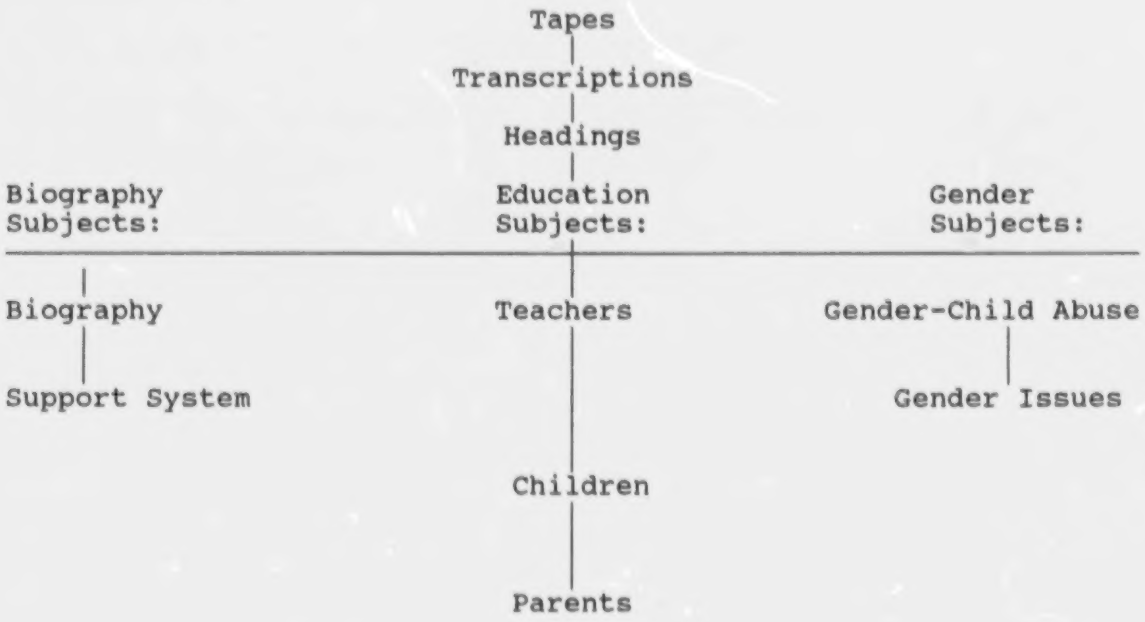
a. Relationships with Teachers, which included the teachers relationships with the staff
b. Relationships with Children, which included the teachers' relationships with girls and boys, and the teachers' preferences for working with a specific age group.
c. Relationships with Parents.

The heading of Gender was broken down into the following subjects:

a. Gender - Child Abuse, which included the teachers' fears, precautions, and reactions to the subject.

b. The Male Teacher and Gender Issues. This heading includes themes raised in other subjects (i.e. relationships with teachers), or themes that did not belong to the previous subjects (i.e. Femininity vs. Masculinity, society's vs. the male teachers' perspectives, etc..)

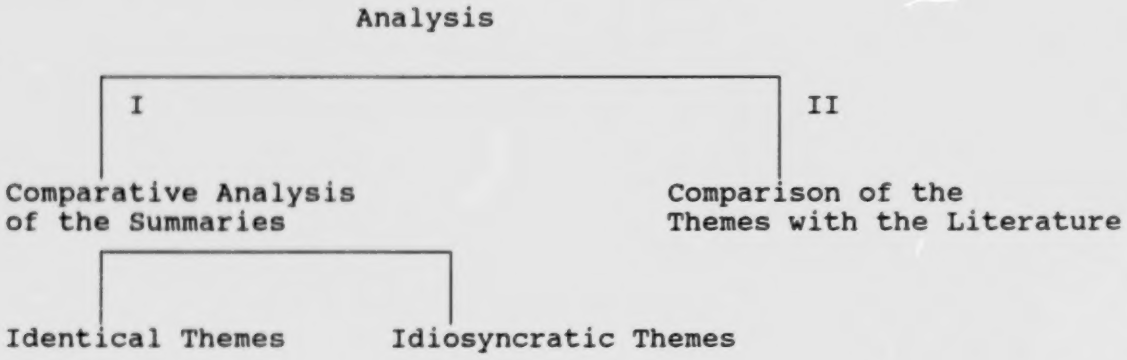
The following scheme summarizes the process of the data analysis:



It is worth noting that the analysis of the headings into the subjects was adapted to each informant, i.e., Jack's biography included the subject of Financial Hardship which did not appear as a separate subject in other informants' analysis because of its limited place in the informants' reports. In Ron's analysis there were no sections about Relationships with Parents, or Gender - Child Abuse. Because of the nature of the research, it was preferred to focus on the informants' interest, rather than focus on a rigid structure of pre-meditated questions.

After each interview was analyzed, it was summarized according to the same headings and subjects. The emphasis in each summary was placed on the informants' stories, as they had been told in the interviews. The five summaries put together (arranged according to the chronological order of the interviews), form the Data section.

A Comparative Analysis of the five summaries formed the first part of the Analysis.


Analysis
I
II
Comparative Analysis of the Summaries
Comparison of the Themes with the Literature
Identical Themes
Idiosyncratic Themes

The Comparative Analysis is structured according to the headings and subjects that were used in the analysis of the interviews. The gender issues are presented in different sections; all gender issues dealing with the teachers, children, and parents, appear under these headings. The rest of the gender issues (which focuses on Society's Perspective vs. the Male Teachers' Perspectives) appears in a separate section. This was done in order to make the teachers', children's, and parents' sections more cohesive and complete.

The second part of the Analysis was the Discussion. In the Discussion, a comparison of the themes which were described in the Comparative Analysis was made with the Review of the Literature. A short summary concluded the whole research.

IV. Results of the Study

Jack

Biography

Jack was born in Northern Vermont, 35 years ago. He has an older brother, Mark (37), who is a photographer and works with the elderly, and a younger brother, Paul (33), who is an electrical engineer in IBM.

Jack went to college in Northern Vermont, when he was eighteen. He describes the college as a small, intimate and expensive school, where he studied American History and Literature. A poet himself, he majored in 20th Century American Poetry.

When he graduated College, he went to live with his brother, Mark, in a family cabin in the woods of Northern Vermont, and spent some months with him. Jack stresses the importance of being re-attached to his roots. There, in the cabin, which is four miles away from the nearest village, and which has no electricity or running water, Jack felt that he was back at home.

> He really helped me, sort of re-attached me to my family ... he re-attached me to my state, mm he helped me get in really good physical condition. ... I mean we were cutting wood by hand. And he, You know, he just really wiped out a lot of that bullshit about being in college, and being smarter than anybody else, expecting to really, you know, turn the world around. You know, all that kind of stuff. With my brother, that was not working.

Jack decided to go to Chicago and worked as a prep cook in a bar. He worked there less than a year, resented the job, and went to work as a cook in a night club. He stayed in the night club for one and a half years. Jack liked the good relationships between the staff, but found himself wondering if working in a night club as a cook, was what he would be doing for a career. He decided to quit his job, and went back to live in the cabin with his brother Mark, for nine months.

When living in the woods, Jack met a "total stranger", who came to visit and suggested that Jack should go and train himself in Montessori's method. The stranger had children in a Montessori school, and he told Jack "Oh, I think you ought to become a Montessori teacher. I think you're going to like little kids." Jack accepted the stranger's suggestion and went to visit a Montessori school.

> ...I walked in, and there was all this babble, of little kids going through...
> You know, and I went out, and sat down in the kitchen, and watched this kids, you know. One of them was drawing a house with ghosts coming out the windows, and stuff. She turned to me. She started telling me this joke, about .. not a joke, but the story, about the painting, and the picture, you know...
> All this elaborate stuff, about ghosts and all this stuff. You know I'm a literature major...
> You know, and I went "Oh Wow!". I could get into this. You know, and the woman was like there. One , like the substitute was there in the kitchen.. she was baking cookies with a couple of kids. She kept smiling, and sort of giving me this look, while, while this kid was telling me this long winded story, and ah, that was pretty much that. And really, it was basically, when I walked in the door, it was this, background babble of voices you know. I mean it was just all these kids working in the different rooms, There was just all this babble. And ah, I just went Wow! This is OK. And that's when I made the decision, to get into the work.

Jack found a position as a substitute teacher in Stonebear, a suburb 12 miles from Chicago. The job of substitute teacher turned to assistant teacher when a teacher left. Jack worked there for a year, with nineteen 2-5 year old's. He came in around 11 AM every day, made lunch, and stayed till 6 PM.

The following year, Jack found a position in Townshand, a wealthy suburb of Chicago.

In his first year in Townshand, he worked in the mornings and in the afternoons with 3-6 year old's. The two different groups came at 10:00-11:30 in the morning and 12:30-16:00 in the afternoon.

By the end of the first year in Townshand, Jack borrowed $1,800 from his parents, and took part in a ten weekend Montessori method training course. There was a time when he went back to the night club to work as a cook, because he needed the money to survive, and he wanted to save money for his training. After a while, he decided to leave the night club and borrowed the money from his parents.

When Jack started working in education, about ten years ago, he also started living with Susan, then his girlfriend, and now his wife. Susan was "wonderfully supportive", but Jack saw her mainly on weekends, because of their different schedules.

In the following year, Jack became an intern in Townshand. His pay amounted to what training had cost him, and he did a lot of substitute work. In the second year, he worked in the mornings with toddlers, and in the afternoons with 3-6 year old's. Jack stayed a third year in Townshand, and then decided to become a head teacher. Susan and Jack moved to South Carolina, where he had a class of 23 children, 2 1/2 to 6 years old. Twelve of the children were between 2 1/2 to 3 years old. Jack worked in South Carolina for four years, and decided to come to New York City to study for a M.S. in Early Childhood Education. In his first year in NYC, he worked as an assistant teacher with seven year old's, and now he works in Manhattan, in a private Pre-School, with a class of five year old's. He plans to graduate this summer, and to become a licensed head teacher.

Jack and Susan (who is a painter), have no children, and live in a rented apartment in New York City. Jack is an avid bicyclist, who rides to work summer or winter; a pet lover (who moved to a larger apartment near a park in order to have their two dogs from Vermont and two parrots); and a poet who writes every day in the early morning.

Relationship with Teachers

Jack is grateful and appreciative of the women he worked with. He had never experienced rejection as a male teacher. If he has any criticism of the teachers, it is grounded on a professional basis.

Jack describes his first year in Townshand, where he worked with 3-6 years old, as very hard: "It was a total wall to me." He regards Nora, the head teacher, as his mentor and friend. Nora, Jack's senior by five years, had a M.S. in Early Childhood Education. Jack describes Nora as a very good teacher, but as a very bad Montessori teacher. Nora did not believe in the Montessori method for toddlers, and incorporated only parts of it.

The first year was hard and confusing for Jack. Nora was demanding, and it was difficult for Jack to figure it all out. Yet, Nora directed him and gave him a lot of advice: "...she turned me on to this theoretical stuff. I mean she was feeding me books." Jack comments about their relationship: "She was very much a headteacher, and I was very much NOT her co-teacher, until about the third year."

From our conversation, I got the impression that Jack prefers the hierarchical approach to co-teaching. He does not mind being an assistant teacher as long as he can initiate his own activities. Last year, he was an assistant teacher and had a hard time because he had no free hand at all. But this year, he feels much better, because as an assistant teacher he has more freedom. Jack wants to regain the position of a head teacher (as he was in the South), and to be responsible for his own classroom.

Before the second year started, Jack asked Nora to be her assistant teacher with the toddlers. It was the work with the toddlers that helped him understand the work with young children. Jack is very appreciative of Nora: "... I think that if I had not met her, I would not have continued. Because she made it very intellectual... she, ahmm, gave me the big issues to think about."

Jack comments that Nora, as a feminist, was very open to him as a male teacher: "... she was into feminism... Those kind of social conscience issues were real for her, so, so she felt that in order to change the way society is, it was necessary to get together in doing all these "female" jobs. So she was very open to it... In fact all the women I have worked with have been that way."

Jack was critical of Pearl, a teacher with whom he worked in Townshand. In their class was Adam, a two year old, who had special needs (1). Jack felt that Pearl dismissed "any attempt to do anything with him." Jack thought that such behavior was "criminal", and tried to the best of his ability to work with Adam in class.

Pearl left Townshand after 14 years of teaching, half a year after Jack left. Jack says that he could not have known, otherwise, he would have stayed and filled her position.

Jack feels that he was very lucky in his first years in education: "I would say I ran into very humane people, and that's been very encouraging to me." Jack praises Donna, his director in Townshand, whom he describes as his best employer ever. When he was about to leave, she gave him a recommendation to work in a facility for mentally retarded adults. Jack describes Donna with deep appreciation: "Nothing ever happened that affected me that -

---

1. See in Detail in next section about Relationships with Children.

she didn't tell me about before... And I was just an assistant. I was nobody...".

Relationships with Children

Jack remembers that in the first year in Stonebear he was scared of the size of the children. Jack is a big person (6'3", 190 pounds), and he did not want to hurt anybody: "Very much afraid of the size of the kids, and... really afraid of like hurting somebody... Because I was a big guy, and they were tiny... There were SO tiny." At the beginning, it was hard for Jack, to see the person within each child: "I think it's hard for every adult to think of little kids as people... I mean it's so much like going to a foreign country." Jack began to feel more comfortable about working with children when he started working with toddlers, 18-34 months old. Jack regards the 21-34 month olds as the ones who best fit in the program. The younger ones needed close supervision, so they would not "swallow things".

> ...it did help me very much, to work with the toddlers. For one thing, the classes were smaller, and it was like two to ten, OK? So that meant things happened more slowly.
> ... And I got to see more of what happened.
> ... I mean, I mean with like twenty kids in the class, you're only seeing half of what happens, you know...
> So, also, those kids were much more direct. You could almost see them thinking. When they were using a material, you could almost SEE them thinking with their hands. You could almost see their thoughts by the way they were manipulating...
> So. And the other thing, there wasn't, there wasn't the age range. And that made it much simpler too. See,

> because in the Montessori classroom it was always mixed ages. So you were having to deal with three year olds and six year olds at the same time.

Jack's involvement and care as a teacher is reflected when he speaks about Adam, a two year old he taught in Townshand. Jack describes the child's problem.

> He may have been autistic.
> Something like that was going on, and some kind of motor control problem.
> He literally, his hands, his hands were like, the muscles in his hands were like so undeveloped that like, grabbing his hand was like grabbing spaghetti.
> And I mean it was just so weak and floppy,

Jack was angered that Adam was neglected in class. He objected to Pearl, the head teacher whom he worked with, who would do nothing with Adam. Jack tried to get Adam to be as involved as possible.

> I tried to insist that he sit with the group at group time. That he, I couldn't make him focus on the group activity, but I did insist that he stay there during the group activity, and I tried to insist that during, during the work time, he'd be doing something. That was productive, that was age appropriate. You know, that didn't look like it was, sort of his wanting to be a baby, you know. And that stuff like, that if he spilt that he should help clean it up, you know, that when it was his turn to put out the cups, that he should put out the cups, stuff like that. That he should as much as possible participate in the daily routine.

Jack praised Dona, his director, for her quick reaction with Adam. Dona observed Adam a few times, and after a while he was sent to a Special Education School.

Jack tells about Gary, a child he taught in South Carolina, who had no males in his immediate family. Jack became an important figure for Gary, probably because he was a male teacher (1). But when Jack is asked about the important features of a teacher, gender (except the example with Gary) does not count as one of them.

> J. In fact, I don't know that, that mm, I've been important as a man to very many children. I would say that's not what, that's not what has mattered.
> D. So what has mattered?
> J. I think, that being warm matters, having a good sense of humor, and indulging children in it matters, so that you appreciate what they do that's kind of kinky, or unexpected,
> You know, and also being very consistent.

Relationships with Parents

Jack welcomes parents' participation in the school program. In Townshand, the mothers were waiting in an adjacent room when the children were in the program, and Jack thought it was one of the best features of the program.

> ... most of these kids that we dealt with were first children, not all of them, but most of them were first children, and most of these women, either felt they had geniuses on their hands, or that they had total monsters on their hands.
>
> ... That was, that was the two extremes, and they were really was not, unless the woman had had children before. There really wasn't much middle ground.
> ... And what this did was, it gave these women, who had been, you know, basically shut up in their apartments with these kids since birth, a chance to go out and talk with adults. Somebody else down with their kids.

---

1. Jack's story about Gary is brought in detail in the Gender issues section.

Jack's work with the parents is mentioned when he describes the years he spent in South Carolina. When he started working, he had to confront two issues: child abuse, and parent's trust (1). In order to establish trust, Jack told the parents they could come any time, and they did. "They certainly came to check me up". Jack talked a lot with the parents, and talked with his assistant who was 7-8 years his senior, and had three children, one in Jack's class.

> I learned a great deal from her. I taught her a great deal too, but as far as getting the parents' perspective, and understanding why they were afraid, and what they were afraid of, and what they felt about their kids, she was wonderful. She just kept saying: "Look, parents feel like this" you know.

Jack was very open about bringing materials from home. He encouraged the connection between home and school, by letting the children bring their toys and books. He let the children hang their art works on the walls, and emphasized their control over their surroundings. By so doing, he enhanced the children's and parents' sense of belonging.

Jack mentions two parents who were very appreciative of what he was doing, because they had interest in education. He does not think it had anything to do with his gender; "... I had a bunch of parents who were really into cultivating a good relationship with their kids' teacher." One parent was a woman who was a teacher of special education, and the other parent was a man who

---

1. About Child Abuse, see in detail in the next part about Gender

was a quartermaster.

> ... What she liked was the amount of choice I gave the kid. He had total control over what he did in the day and she really liked that. ... I had another family that I got along with very well, and the man worked at Paris Island, at some kind of quartermaster job. I don't know exactly what he did, but he was studying Early Childhood at the local University.
> And his wife was a secretary, and he wanted to get into the business.
> And he was very encouraging to me. I mean he was actually envious that I had this job...
> Oh no, come on, that blew my mind...
> He was very good with kid! He was very good with his kid, and he actually more than anyone else, more than anyone else, he came many many times to the classroom. He came at all times of the day. He came and stayed all day a couple of times. He really, he really liked it.
> ... I mean it was very encouraging, and we, I mean we were like, I mean one time we went on a field trip, you know, in his car, and talked about Piaget the entire ride.

Gender - Child Abuse

Jack's deepest fear as a male teacher is of being accused of child abuse. While he was working in Townshand, there was a great publicity to a child abuse case. Jack remembers an atmosphere of witch hunting, and says that he was very careful. He did not do any of the toileting; in case of need, the mothers were next door, and he was working with a female teacher.

When Jack came to South Carolina, he was aware of the issue of child abuse, and yet, as he began working, the parents surprised him.

J. A group. A group of black parents came.. I was setting up the room, Dan. They came into the room and they told me they were concerned that I might molest their children.
D. How did you react?
J. I asked them if they knew what the signs of child abuse were?
I mean, you know, I said to them, I said to them "Look, if you're worried about this, there's nothing that I'm going to say to you, that's going to reassure you that I'm not, not a child molester from out... you know, looking to take advantage of your children, you know.
So, do you know what the signs of abuse are?
Do you know how your child might change if he or she were being abused. And then I told them. I said "Look, if the child comes home, and they seem to have soreness, you know, if there is some redness, if their personality changes radically, and there's no explanation to that, if they're fearful of going to school, you know. I said these are the kind of things that draw your attention to it.
D. What, what was your reaction to this question.
J. I had no idea how outrageous it was. They were so, I mean, they just kind of walked in when I was there. I was flipped out. There was enough stuff to set this classroom up once.
... what they were afraid of, I think, as much as, as sexual abuse was physical abuse. You know: "This guy is going to get mad at my kid, and hit him."
D. You mean, it was only black people who were afraid or also white people?
J. No, I think the whites were just as concerned, but, I don't want to say more sophisticated, because the people who came in were really very sophisticated. They didn't come in and voice, they weren't as upfront.
You know, in a way those black people did me a tremendous favor. They were very upfront. They were so upfront, Dan, they came in and said "Look, we are scared about this, OK?" God, how honest, you know, how honest.

Jack treated the parents' fears in two ways. The first was to welcome parents' visits, questions, and involvement. The second was to be very cautious. Jack imposed on himself a rule of telling his assistant whenever he was going to change a child. He avoided being alone with a child in the back of the room, and whenever in the playground, he sent his assistant to change a child. Jack mentions that once he broke his own rule, and came in from the playground to change a child. Christine's grandmother came to pick her up and saw Jack changing her granddaughter. Jack eventually thought that the incident did him a good service, because the grandmother could see for herself that he was doing his job, and that he was gentle. Jack is sure that the word got out that he was gentle with children, and it helped to diffuse some of the parents' apprehensions.

Jack connects the issue of the parents' fear about him in the bathroom, with their concern about the bathroom being co-ed. When the issue was raised in an orientation meeting, Jack justified it by saying that the teachers wanted the setting to be as homelike as possible, and therefore did not separate the bathroom.

Nowadays, Jack sees another reason for the rejection of males, and parents' fears, namely, homophobia. It is widely spread, he believes, because of the spread of AIDS, and the fear of parents for their children's health. This fear adds up to the fears of racial discrimination (between blacks and whites), and fears of sexual and physical abuses.

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

In Jack's description of his family, there is a complex interweaving of different motifs. On the one hand, the men did not change diapers and did not give bottles. On the other hand, his father took care of his children when they were young, and was good at it.

Jack thinks that it is meaningful that he had a male role model, because it makes it easier for him, as a teacher, to understand the role of a male teacher for young children. This understanding proves to be useful, not only for children who have male and female role models at home, but especially for children who had no males at home, and therefore, looked up at him as a role model.

> ... I think one of the things that's allowed me to get into this was, you know, I was like 3 and 4 and 5 years old when my father was in college, you know. Because he got married right out of high school, and had kids. I went to his college graduation, and that meant that while he was in college my mother worked. And I spent a great deal of time at home with my father, and when I was a preschool child. I think that's been very important to my being able to do the job. So I do have a model of a male taking care of me. I do have a model of that. And I don't know if I could do the job without that. You know, I think that's why a lot of males get out of it. They come up bankrupt when they go...

Jack thinks that he was lucky to have his father as a role model, because the male figure as it was reflected in the American culture when he was a child (and to a lesser degree now), was so far removed from taking care of young children.

When Jack went to teach young children, he had not only his father as a role model, but also his own ideas about the changing male role.

> I also loved that idea of being able to turn women's liberation on its head. You know to step into a job that was outside male's sexual roles.

Jack recalls a female carpenter, one of the mothers in South Carolina, who was very supportive of him. She followed his line of thought about changing sex-roles and looking at men and women in a different way.

> ... Her husband was a carpenter, and she worked with him. You know, that was her job too. She was a carpenter.
> And, you know, so she was very much into, not only into the feminism and issues of feminism, but doing it. You know, and she wanted her daughter to see that work was work, you know. That people did what they were suited to. That's what she wanted for her child, you know. And so she thought it was very good, that her child had a male kindergarten teacher, you know. Because, that was that. She was getting exactly what she wanted for her child, which was real confusion about sex roles, you know.

Jack feels that beyond the fact that as a male he is not encouraged to "have that kind of sensitivity to other people, that sort of empathy with other people", "the job is denigrated because it's typically a woman's job".

Jack comments on the children's perceptions, and concludes that the male and female teachers provide a parental model for the children.

> You know, I'm not trying to say that you're these children's parents, or that you have that kind of power with theses kids, that's not true. But they take that image of my parents and they put it on you as a way to understand your role with them. They, the children do that. I was, for example, when I was working with Nora, I was told repeatedly that we were married.
> This is by the kids. I was asked if we had children.

> Many of them were firmly convinced that we lived in the classroom.
> You know, that we had to be married even if we said we weren't.
> That we must be in love, even if we said we weren't. I mean they tried... And this was not only the very young children, the toddlers, but also, the four year olds, the five year olds.
>
> ...So, it's not really, I don't really believe that its women work, it's human work.

In the above example, Jack comments on a point which is so evident, that we often become oblivious to it: children think in a concrete way. Therefore, if they have a model at home of mother and father, they transform their life experience into class. The children do it, says Jack, in order to understand the teachers' roles with them.

Jack tells about Gary, a black child he taught in South Carolina, who grew up with no men at home. Gary's mother worked in the state capital, and sent money to her mother, who took care of Gary. It took Gary a while to get used to Jack, but gradually he opened up. Jack noticed that Gary was physically talented, and let him express his talents on the playground. Jack recalls that Gary became very attached to him (and he to Gary), and he attributes a great deal of it to his being a significant male figure in Gary's life.

> J. I think I played a really important role in his life, because he lived in a houseful of women. He was literally the only male in the house.
> And he had extraordinary talents, physically. He had incredible coordination - large motor. He was astonishing. And..
> D. What do you mean? He was a good athlete?
> J. Oh yeah. And he was very down on himself when I first

met him. He was very quiet and shy, and wouldn't participate in anything.
And I think I really helped him with that stuff, and I was able to do that partly because I was male.
D. So you mean, he got attached to you?
J. Yeah. And I made it OK for him to be, you know,
D. Do you remember any expression that made it clear that he is attached to you, or that you are really an important figure, male figure for him? Any specific incidents that made it clear.
J. Yeah, well he started, when he started talking to me about his two mothers, I thought it was very significant, that he chose to talk to me about that.

Jack does not see real differences between the activities he initiates, and the ones the women teacher do. He praises the women's ingenuity in class, and their relaxed manner on the playground.

Jack appreciates the women for their physical endurance. He admits that in his first year of work he was always exhausted, and learned to appreciate the difficult work the women were doing. Jack thinks that the physical hardship is one of the reasons that keep man and women out of the profession: "You're just totally exhausted, and nobody will pay you for it."

Jack says that working with women had taught him to relate to them in other ways than sexually: "...pretty much, I don't have sexual feelings for the women I work with." Jack names the reasons; the women were older and were his bosses; "women seemed to be very wary... of mixing sex with work"; and there is a lot of work to do when working with young children.

Jack portrays different attitudes toward physical activities in the various states he had worked in. Nora "would not tolerate any kind of .. super hero play." In South Carolina, the parents and the teachers were relaxed about the children playing in the playground. In New York City, the teachers and the parents are very cautious about rough play, and playing outdoors. They are scared of children getting hurt, and he complies with their sensitivities.

Jack feels that for boys, who are discouraged from a very young age from displaying "physical affection with each other", physical activities are a way to express these feelings. Jack's solution was to let the children engage in physical activities, but to insist that they take care of each other, and feel responsible if someone gets hurt.

Integrity and Individualism

Jack's choice of teaching young children was a deliberate choice, and he was ready to sacrifice a lot in order to pursue his career in teaching: "I really bought that line, hook, line and sinker, that these were the most critical nine years." Jack's conviction gave him the power to overcome the difficulties;

> ...I had the energy to ride 24 miles a day. It didn't, it didn't cross my mind that that was too far to go. It didn't. And I took that as proof that that was something I really needed to do. You know, and that's pretty much been my attitude throughout. There was a time when I was working at Townshand there, when I was, I think like one year I made like six or seven thousand dollars, and for a while Susan and I had split up. I was living on my own. I was living in what I considered to be poverty conditions.
> I was living in a drug neighborhood, in an apartment that was OK, it was actually a good apartment, it was very cheap, but it was in a neighborhood that wasn't

> safe, it was miles west of where anyone white lived, and I was riding back and forth, and the winter turned out to be one of the coldest that Chicago has had in the last 20 years, ...

Jack knew that he was going to make less money, but he chose to work with children. For Jack, the work is a source of pride, because of the responses he gets from children, parents, and teachers. The work enables Jack to express himself and to do what he loves.

> ...Personality really comes out. You know, who you are and what you really believe, really come out. And I think that's been one of the things that really attracted me. I feel like this work is incredibly good for my sense of integrity.
> Because little kids cut through all that stuff, and they get right down to where you are at.

As it will be detailed (in the next part about financial hardships), Jack suffered and still suffers, financially, and socially, from the choice he has made. Yet, in all of our long conversations about work, he has never seriously raised the issue of doing something else. Although he is a cook, and a resourceful person, he regards teaching young children as his profession of choice. It is out of the question for him to do anything else, as long as he can teach.

Financial Hardships

With the exception of the period in South Carolina, Jack mentions a continuous struggle to survive financially. In his second year in education, he had a hard time, not only dealing with a new profession, but also dealing with poverty.

> ...I could hardly afford to eat. Yeah, it was very tight. You know the first year that I worked there I paid $1800 for that course. They gave me $1800 that year. Plus what I made substituting for other people, and staying late,...

Lately, Jack deeply feels the consequences of his professional choice and it hurts him badly. He laments that because of his choice "I grew myself up to be a failure." Most painful is that he cannot afford to have children, because he does not have the means to raise them, and he does not want to raise them in poverty. The move to New York City emphasized the financial hardship, because New York is much more expensive than South Carolina. Jack feels that he is able to teach wealthy children, while he can not have his own.

> J. It's only now, I would say it's only now that I really started to feel that very heavily. Only now.
> D. What, what is this that you feel heavily, ...
> J. The, the crimps that having a very low paying job puts on my lifestyle. You know, it's only been this year that I've been able to get health insurance even, you know..
> So, not having health insurance, not being able to buy a car, not being able to consider buying a house, considering children to be too expensive to have, you know, being able to take summers off as an absolute luxury. You know, that my line, my line is free time is the only luxury this country has to offer.
> The only REAL luxury this country has to offer.
> You know, and that's great as long as I can afford to take the time off. I mean really take it off. I'm very lucky. I have a place to go. My family has a summer camp, I mean to go there and cut my expenses to

> nothing. Although I still have to pay rent on my apartment when I go.

It is not only the financial hardship that hurts Jack, it is also some of the responses he got from his own family. Jack describes his young brother, Paul, an Electrical Engineer, who works for IBM, and has two children, aged thirteen and eleven.

> J. He was pretty supportive. I mean he's never said anything about.. He tends to treat me as a poor relative though. Give me things, you know, ask me if I got ... enough money. He doesn't do that to me as much as he used to, but he was very concerned..
> D. He's the one working with computers.
> J. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's the one making money.

The most painful reaction Jack got, was from his father-in-law, who is a very rich businessman, and owns plants in the U.S., Japan, and West Germany. He once made a "nasty" remark about a present Jack had bought his daughter, and Jack felt that Susan's father "was very critical of her choice." Since then "things have kind of loosened up", but Jack felt humiliated, and the bitter taste lingered.

The Support Systems.

After I heard Jack's descriptions about the various difficulties, financial, social, and emotional, it was a natural question to ask what keeps him going. The answer lies not only in his values and deep belief in educating young children, but also in the support he got from different sources.

Jack mentions that from the time he met Susan, she was "wonderfully supportive". There was mutual support between Jack and Susan, which enabled them to develop their careers, he in education, and she as a painter. Susan's support is by and large, the single most significant factor in Jack's ability to cope with the difficulties innate to his professional choice.

As I looked through Jack's biography, I found that his involvement in education has deep roots in the family's history. Jack's paternal grandmother was a superintendent of her church school, and was involved for years with the children of her small town. She was very supportive of Jack and regarded his work as a serious job. The maternal grandmother of Jack's mother taught in High School "and she was ...just excellent with us, when we were little kids." Jack's mother "had worked in kindergarten for a while... when I was in High School." Jacks's father was supportive and never rebuked him for his choice.

> ...family myth has it that he was very good with his children, as young children. I never got, you know, any crap from him about, you know, about "how much is this going to pay?" "Is it going to pay enough?" You know, "you're wasting your time. Why don't you get a job that makes money?" I have never gotten any of that kind of stuff from him.

Mark, Jack's brother, was supportive and came to visit Jack's class in Chicago. Jack's parents and his father's mother came to his class in South Carolina. Jack regards the family's support as part of the way the family had evaluated his strengths, and therefore, it was natural that he chose education.

> J. They felt like I used mm, I mean they always felt that I had a good ability to talk. You know, and that I was using that. That I was more a people's person than a business person, and that I was using that.

Jack says that his grandfather on his mothers' side was shocked when he heard about the money issue, but he was supportive of Jack and willing to help if the need arose.

The close circle of the family is a great source of strength for Jack. The values he grew up with made it possible for him to look at the education of young children in the way he does. His retreats to the cabin in the woods, after College, after the restaurant, and every summer, highlight Jack's perspective, which cuts beyond the common values of urban society, and into the purity of looking and examining the basics of existence, even in a modern and complex world.

Summary

Of the five informants I have interviewed, Jack is the one who most reflects the painful consequences of his professional choice. It was hard to hear the words "I grew myself up to be a failure" from Jack, who nevertheless, loves his profession profoundly.

Jack conveys deep appreciation and gratefulness to the women he had worked with. He regards his work as a human work, which does not exclude any of the sexes. Jack is a humanist, who feels dearly for the American society and, at the same time, laments its harshness. This harshness, conveys Jack, is not only cruel to great numbers of children who do not get the best opportunities which any child is entitled to, but also to the teachers, who teach the children and whose professional choice entails a low position on the social and financial rungs.

Charles

Biography

Charles, twenty two years old, was born in Massachusetts. His father was in the Navy and the family moved frequently. His parents divorced, and his mother remarried when he was in Junior High School. Charles has a younger brother, and two young sisters from his mother's second marriage.

> ... I was born in Massachusetts...
> And then next year, my brother was born in Connecticut, and the next year, we moved to Oklahoma for about six months, and then we moved to Hawaii. So by the time I was three and a half, they'd gone all the way across the country, and then, back. My mother divorced my father, who was at the Navy at the time. That's why we've been around so much. We came back to New York for two years, then my mother got a job as a teacher in a University, we went down to West Virginia for eight years...
> We came back to New Jersey, 'cause she remarried, and he got a new position. Then he got a position in Minnesota, so my mother moved out there with him. But I was about at the end of High School, I didn't want to leave. I mean it was like, forget it, I don't want to move anymore, ...

Although Charles's family moved frequently, his grandparents always lived in New York City. The family originally came from France. His mother and grandmother lived in France, and Charles plans to study French to have a better connection with his family.

Charles's mother and grandmother thought he should become priest, and as a child, he thought he would become an architect or an engineer. Charles went to colleges in West Virginia and in the Bronx, and studied engineering for two and a half years. He eventually left his studies because he found it too stressful. He plans to go back to school next year, and to continue with engineering. This time he wants to go "real slow", and take courses in Child Psychology as well.

Charles used to bring his little sisters to the Day Care Center in New York. The director was impressed by his interaction with his sisters, and offered him a job as an assistant teacher. Charles started working in Day Care a year and a half ago. At the beginning, he was a "floater", moving through the three different rooms of infants, two's, and three's. Now, he is working as an assistant teacher in the two's room. There are 11-14 children in his class, and three teachers.

Charles lives at home and plans to stay in education. He loves teaching, and thinks that his work is important for the children. He plans to continue his studies in order to increase his knowledge and to improve his income. He admits that since he lives at home, the monetary issue is easier for him.

For Charles, becoming a teacher in a Day Care Center was a surprise: "I just never expected myself in this position myself." But now that he is teaching, he partially attributes it to his growing up without a father figure at home.

> ... My biggest advantage was that I had a younger brother, who is a year younger than me.
> So we always had a good, secure, stable way that way, you know, a stable environment. But I didn't have a good strong male. That's probably one of the reasons I

> do this work... Was just because I'm in a situation where now I can provide this for some other child.

Charles grew up in a house, which was happy and warm to the children.

> I always liked toys. I grew up in a household where there were so many toys, that we didn't ever have a clean household. Because toys were all over the place. My brother and myself, and then my sisters had their toys, and so, I like toys. And I enjoy interacting with them, with the children, with the toys.

Of the five informants, Charles is the one who talks the most about the children. He is enthusiastic, and imitates his students a lot. There is an aura of freshness in his attitude toward the children, combined with deep insights into their behavior.

In his free time Charles loves to paint, row, or read.

Charles, twenty two years old, transmits a living enthusiasm for the world of children. During the two hour interview, he acted out numerous children, mimicking their talk and expression in an animated, irresistible, funny way. When he described a child building an aeroplane of lego blocks, I could perceive not only the development of the child's spacial conception, but also the actual aeroplane flying in the class. When Charles told the story about Larry and the three elephants in the park (in the Parents section), I could imagine his little student's enchantment with his tale. I could also see the astonishment on the face of Larry's father, when Larry told him that he **had seen** the animals in the park.

Charles, more than any other informant, conveys a thorough enjoyment of his interaction with the children. I could imagine, that if it was not for safety and order's sake, he would have made the classroom into the biggest playground possible, rolling on the floor, and brushing colors with more enjoyment, than the children themselves.

Charles conveys a deep respect for the children. He loves their thought, enjoys listening to their language, and is fascinated by the way they develop, physically and mentally.

Charles conveys a wonderful optimism. He is not appalled by the low salary, because he wants to develop and grow within the field. He laughs at society's image of male teachers, because he thinks it is ridiculous; and he is appreciative of good team work because he enjoys the company of his colleagues.

Yet, Charles has an acute awareness of children's vulnerability. As the big brother, who takes care of his two little sisters, he is aware of the dangers which children may face, and regards children's safety as his top priority. He also senses, that children do not know, and are not used to adult male figures. As a male role model, Charles wants to reduce the children's anxiety about males, and to give them the opportunity of interacting with a male figure. He hopes to enrich the children's experience, and to break, with the boys, especially, the stereotypes they have of the male figure.

Relationships with Teachers

Charles speaks with appreciation about the women he works with. He describes the teachers as "good acquaintances, good co-workers." If there were tensions with a particular teacher, it appeared that this teacher had problems with other teachers, as well. Charles tells about Sarah, the assistant teacher, who left, and whose position he got:

> ... The woman who left, who I took her place, after she left, it appears that she didn't like me at all. Sarah hated my gut, you know. I don't know why, and it appeared that a lot of the teachers hated Sarah's guts.

There is no mention in the interview of male-female tension. Charles feels that he is welcomed and encouraged.

Charles describes Eve, the head teacher, with great appreciation. He says that she is very open to discussion of work matters with him, and would stay after work, because during the day, there is no time for discussions.

When Charles started to work, there was a male teacher, David, who had been working for a couple of years, and finally left for Florida. David was a role model for Charles, and he regards him as his teacher: "... David was almost like a mentor at times". David encouraged him, and helped him by pointing out the mistakes Charles was making as a beginner.

Charles is proud of the good team work that developed in his room last year. He is encouraged by the responses he gets from the teachers, and the feeling of "camarderie" he has in the Day

Care Center.

> ... Last year, it was amazing. Last year with David and Julliette and Andrea, and myself, it was like a really good team. And that, like last year, we had the best classroom. Out of all three. I mean it was like, it was noticeable. I mean it was so well oiled that it was like, you know, as a teacher went from one side of the room to the other, another one just slowly, just more flowing.

The rotating of teachers between the different rooms does not help to build strong ties. Charles has not established any special relationships with any of the teachers, since they have either changed positions, or have left.

Relationships with Children

Charles describes children's first reaction to him as a mixture of surprise and enjoyment, but he admits that the responses could be different too. The younger children, especially the girls, were shy and even scared of him at the beginning. Charles explains that these children were not used to adult males (even if they had a father), and therefore, they were scared. It took him a long time to gain the girls' trust. Charles attributed it to his being a "floater" and not having continuous contact with one specific group. It was only after he had been around long enough, that the children got used to him.

Charles tells about Nancy, a girl who was scared of him at the beginning, but who loves him now.

> She will talk to me constantly, she would even say "Charles, I love you", "Oh, thank you Nancy, I love you too." But I remember, you know quite well, that when I first started and I would go in Class I, she was really afraid of me. (1)
> She was like, she's a very temperamental child in that, she like, ... when she gets upset she's very grumpy, and she'll stay that way the whole day, and even in Class III. But now she's used to me, I'm used to her, so that, it's like, it's an easier issue between us. Back then it was like all the time.

Charles conveys a deep appreciation and enjoyment of children. He enjoys their language, thought, play, and development.

> ... what I really like about this manipulative lego, is actually watching them develop. Where they'd actually have a block and another block on the top, sticking out at the front ends, see, "this is my airplane" to going down about two months later on, to get the same block with the same little piece sticking on, but you get two on side and one in the back and a person in the middle,...
>
> I like that. I really do. Where they just really, they have an idea of what they are doing, no matter how far out it is, how realistic it is. It's just really fun to be able to talk with them,...
> And just be able to catch things that, out of the mouth of babes, it's amazing. That's what I enjoy the most.
> This being able to be with the children, and interacting with them.

When Charles is asked which group he likes the most, he points to the twos. He finds it a real challenge to communicate with them. Charles feels that somehow, when infancy ends and childhood begins, the changes are not only physical, but mental as well. Suddenly, the babies become persons he can interact with.

---

1. Charles mentions classes I, II, and III, which are Infants, Two's and Three's, respectively

> ... you always hear about "the Terrible Two's", and how, they're so dependent, but, you know, it's different. You really see a real big jump, and these children right now, are just, are just fantastic. They build things, they play with things, but it's like, I don't know, it's, they are a truly fully developed person at this point.

Charles's satisfaction in work stems from the responses he gets from the children, parents, and teachers. The most important responses for him seem to be the children's.

> ... I mentioned Nancy. She said "I love you Charles", and that to me is one of the best times in the entire, when I worked there. Because a lot of the children come up, and just out of the blue they'll say this to me. You know.
> For no reason, you know. It'll be like in the most unusual situation. They'll be playing with something and they'll look up at me and they'll say that. And it really warms a part of my heart, that every day I get to hear someone say that to me.

Relationships with Parents

Charles felt that the parents liked the idea that there is a male figure in class, and he received encouraging responses.

> They liked the idea that they had someone in there who was a male figure role for all their children, because, they may have it at home, but even if not, the idea is that in the classroom all they see is women.

Charles thinks that the main reason that the parents do not talk a lot with him is that he is not the head teacher, and the parents prefer to talk to Eve. Another reason may be, that he has not gone yet to the potluck dinners with the parents, and hasn't had a chance to interact with them.

Charles feels that he has formed closer relationships with the parents who have known him longer, and who stay longer in the morning.

Charles mentions Larry, who is a very quiet boy, with whom he has established a close relationship. Charles' story about the Three Elephants in the Park, reveals that he has managed to establish good communication with Larry's father, as well.

Charles tells about Larry:

> C. ...he's the kind of child, who is very quiet outwardly. He's a child that will fall down and hit his head on the floor, and say Ok. "Oh Larry, let me give you a hug. Are you OK?" And tell me "Oh, I'm fine, I'm fine", and go home and say "Oh, I'm hurting so much from this headache I got in the class".
> D. Laughter.
> C. Not saying anything in school. And his parents realize this, but, you know, there was a time, ...
> ... it wasn't so much unusual as how the child saw it as something unusual. And, Larry's father came up to me the next day and said, or two days later and said: "Charles, did you guys see three elephants in the park?" or something like that. I said "No, we actually talked about three elephants, like imagine". And he said "Oh, so it actually really happened", or something like that. You know, and it was like, because Larry would tell him "Charles and I were doing this." and "Did this really happen, Charles?" "Yes it did". "Ah. OK, I was just a little worried that he was making all this up".

Gender - Child Abuse

Charles emphasizes that the children's safety is his first concern. Safety means that the children will be protected when they are on the street, and will be safe from child abuse in the Day Care Center. Charles says that he had no problem with changing children, because he changed his sisters and went through their toilet training. The problem is that someone from the outside may accuse him of child abuse when he is changing the children in the bathroom; readying them for the swimming pool; or explaining the difference between the sexes, when the children raise the issue.

> ...the only thing I feel uncomfortable with is... I get afraid of people thinking, you know "He's in the bathroom with those children. They're naked". And you know a male in that kind of situation has got a stigma to it.
> ... I had children come to me and say "Hey look what I've got, and here's my penis", or "here's my vagina" things like that. Oh my goodness! This is, this is it, you know.
> D. Laughter.
> C. The perfect situation right? Here come the cops now.

Charles tries to explain the difference between the sexes to the children in the "simplest, most understated terms". He admits that he does not like to discuss the subject with the children, and does his best to avoid it. His own precaution is that he does not stay in the bathroom when the children are there, but waits in the other room. This way he respects their privacy, and avoids possible accusations of child abuse.

Charles says that he has felt no special sensitivity of the parents to the issue of a male teacher in the bathroom. He attributes it to the confidence the teachers and the parents have in him, and to the fact that he had been investigated (like any other teacher in the Day Care Center, male or female), before he started to work.

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

Charles' anxiety about changing the children in the bathroom, is not only because of the fear of child abuse accusations, but because sometimes, he admits, he finds it hard to do. Charles says that he finds it much easier to change the infants than the older children.

> I mean, babies are different. When I changed my sisters, it's like a totally, for me, when you're a baby on a changing table, or you're a toddler or a preschooler, in the toilet. It's two different, it's actually two different, it's like aliens, they don't exist. They're totally, two different species, you know.

Charles described a particularly difficult child in this matter of changing. His description reveals that he was uneasy, physically and emotionally, when changing the child.

> ... And my biggest problem is that, one of the reasons, why I keep on thinking about this is because at Class III, there is a boy who has had a lot of problems with going to the bathroom, and wetting his pants. ...
> It's not urination. It's actual valve.. I mean for a while, in the beginning of the year, it seemed that he was so overwhelmed about what's going on around him, that he would excrement at least two times a day, in his pants, for a two month period. Every single day. It was really hard. And that's one of the things he was he got, upset about, because I was with these hand, with these infant wipes and I'd be with the toilet paper I'd have to wipe the back, I have to wipe the front, I had to wipe his testicles, and I did not like that. ..
> ... I mean, I had a real aversion to doing this.
> ... Because at this point, I shouldn't have to do this.
> ... Not so much from the point of I don't, actually not, it's more like, I shouldn't have to do this. I don't like touching this area.

Charles has spoken about it with his mother, and she said that like in anatomy class, one gets used to the difficult scenes after a while. He has also spoken with the teachers in the Day Care Center, and they told him that they have the same feelings of uneasiness.

Charles senses that some of the children, male and female, are afraid of him in the bathroom. He handles it by waiting in the next room, and helping the children when they call him.

Charles discerns the main difference between him and the female teachers, in the way he does activities. Charles easily points to the differences he has had with the female teachers with respect to physical activities. At the beginning, he used to be rough with the children, but he had learned to do the physical activity with more self awareness, and control.

> C. ... when I first started out, I was much rougher with the children than I am now.
> Because, I don't... I wasn't sure. And it appears there's nothing wrong in that. I was just a little rougher than most of the teachers were, because they were women, and they just didn't feel that's what they should be doing.
> D. What do you mean rough?
> C. Well, actually, I horsed around with them a little bit.
> OK. I like to run around much more, and to a certain extent that's a bad habit because they get a little more wound up, but in the right settings, it's fine, because, they may not be inclined to run around, and do those things, and it gives children an outlet which they actually have, and it is, you know. They go wild with it.

Charles thinks, that it is not only his way of doing the activities which is different, but that the children's interaction with him is different, as well.

His presence in class gives the children an option for different interaction, and new opportunities for play. Charles can be a "Daddy", or he can be a "Boy". When he plays these roles, they differ from a child's or a female teacher's play.

> ... they actually have a totally different interaction with me, than with let's say, Vera, or Mary, or ... .. Melanie, because I'm a man. You know, this is just, this is, you know, this is like my Daddy!.

Charles perceives his role, as a male teacher, to be of special importance in three areas. The first is giving the children the opportunity to see the differences between male and female figures. The second is being a part of the children's development of sex role identity. The third is breaking the children's stereotypes about males.

In the first area, Charles values the male teachers' interaction, as part of the children's educational experience.

> ...the primary issue of the actual program is, care, you know, tender care, where you nurture the child, encourage it to grow in all areas. Don't emphasize academics, and try to develop the child.
> ... And that's one of the reasons, I guess, why they were so happy with me being in the program. Since this is a philosophy where you're trying to encourage a child to grow, with a male teacher, there's a new, new outlet for that child.

In the second area, Charles thinks that generally speaking, the teachers' (male or female) most important role, is to be a role model for the children. But with regard to the male teacher, it is not only that the children perceive a different quality in his activity, but also that the male teacher has, just like the female teacher, an important part in the development of the children's sex-role identity.

> ... they're boys, and they're interacting with other boys, so they know what boys are like. Fine. But they don't know what a man is like, and what an adult is, and maturity in the male side is from a woman.
> ... Because there are certain things that just aren't done by a woman, that are done by a man, the other side does.

In the third area, Charles thinks that his presence in class gives the children an opportunity to have a realistic impression of a man, instead of having a caricature sketched by stereotypes in the media.

> ... these boys to a certain extent are like "Yeah, we want to shoot that guy, bang, bang, bang, bang". And like, to a certain extent that's what they feel that males are all about, like GI Joe, is one of the greatest heros, Ninja Turtles, or Superman.
> ... To them, what they see on TV, let's see if they're into cowboys, their idea is that a man is rough, and is very violent, and to a certain extent, I think that by being around, I show that even though I am rough, I am not a violent person.
> And therefore, that is not their role.

Charles is aware of the social image of male teachers in Early Childhood Education, and it makes him laugh. He gives a recent example out of the film "Kindergarten Cop", Arnold Schwartzenegger, the former Mr. Universe, plays a teacher in a PreSchool.

> ... I just saw Kindergarten Cop last night, and, cause I wanted to see it, since it's also with the situation,

> that I can like relate to, and there was a scene in the movie which was very small but I laughed so hard. You know, because, it had like three teachers, three parents talking on the sidewalk in front of the school, and these are kindergarten teachers. "a male kindergarten teacher?" You just don't hear them. "He's gotta be gay, he's gotta be gay", this and that. And I'm thinking like, and then, ahm, you see him walking down the street. And they say "There he is", and they say "Oh my goodness, he's so cute"!

Charles gave the following reasons for the scarcity of male teachers in the field: low salaries which contradict the male role as the breadwinner; a "vicious circle" in which the men are the breadwinners and the women are the care givers; a stigma of being either homosexual or a failure; and the novelty and scarcity of Child Care in the USA.

Charles admits that, sometimes, he is embarrassed to say that he is working in Day Care. He says it is painful, because he feels defensive, instead of being proud of what he is doing.

> I've talked to other people, Christine especially. She said like "Charles, you know, you're in a good position. There's no reason to be embarrassed by it." You know, like sensing my own secret, cause sometimes I'll be thinking like "Gee whiz, I'll introduce myself, and I'll say this is what I am, and it'll be like "Gosh, what's wrong with him?" I mean, come on. I feel, like defensive, and there's no position why I should, because I'm in a position where I'm actually showing, I'm actually developing a child. I'm helping a child to, you know, be something.
>
> And ahm, it just seems, like they just don't see it that way. They see it as a man who cannot make it in the real world, and has to go into this rinky-dink world of Child Care.

The Support Systems

Charles, who grew up without a father's presence, has emotional support from his mother. She works in Special Education, and helps him with advice. He likes to discuss matters of work with her, and she is resourceful and encouraging.

Charles' family thought that he should go and help people. A girl whom he dated, was impressed by the way he was interacting with his sisters, and thought he would be a great father. Charles did not imagine that he would be working with young children. He surprised his relatives, friends, and himself, when he went into Child Care. His family was happy that he found a job, and even more so to know that he liked what he was doing.

Summary

Charles, the youngest of the informants, has the freshest attitude about working with young children. He conveys, in the most direct way, the feelings which the work with young children has evoked in him. He has live enthusiasm for the children and immensely enjoys their company.

Charles senses that it is not only that he does the activities differently than the female teachers, but that the children's interaction with him is different. His presence in class is, therefore, a new element, a new experience, which otherwise the children miss.

As a child who grew up with no father's presence at home, Charles is a first hand witness to the importance of a male figure in children's lives. He admits he wants to give the children a male presence, becuase he had to grow up without it.

Jeff

Biography

Jeff was born 50 years ago to a Canadian mother and an Irish father. He was the first in his family to be born in a hospital.

> My mother and father were both farm families. My father had sixteen kids in his family in Ireland. My mother had fourteen in Canada.
> They were all born in the woods, so to speak.

Jeff grew up in a Catholic lower middle class family. His mother was a psychiatric nurse in a hospital, and his father was a longshoreman. He grew up in mid East-Side Manhattan, in an international community which was warm and close.

> I grew up, on the East Side, in the tenements, where all European families lived. The Jewish, ah, Polish, Catholic, Protestant, ah, Calvins, Calvins in there, ah, Dutch, French. It was an international tenement, It was really great. It was a really great movie, international hotel kind of a thing.
> All these different cultures were all mixed into this tenement, and it was all family. I mean everybody protected each other's kids. There was still the old neighborhood attitude, that was found in the early fifties, and forties, and thirties in New York.
> You could go two blocks away from home, and if you cursed, your Mamma knew about it before you got back home, and you wondered how Mamma knew about my cursing, I was two blocks away from home, and I did it, because all the mothers used to take care of each others kids. They watched down. They knew. It was a true neighborhood.

Jeff used to go to the hospital and "hang around with a veterinarian, and helped him in operations, when I was a kid." These early experiences exposed him to science, and initiated a lifelong interest in animals, biology, and ecology.

Jeff married early and had four children by the time he was twenty nine years old. His oldest son is twenty seven years old, and the youngest of his three daughters is twenty three years old.

Jeff considers himself an adventurer and explorer, and led a very intensive life in his twenties. He served in the Navy, in an anti-submarine unit, and "traveled all over the Atlantic Ocean, from the North Pole all the way to the South Pole." In the service, he volunteered for a 90 day mission in Saigon as an undercover anti-drug agent, but got badly hurt after 28 days and went back to his ship. It was a meaningful "life awakening experience" for Jeff. "Adventure has its limit. Sometimes stupidity blinds you." Jeff mentions that his restlessness led him to hitch hike "all around the United States, and Mexico, and Canada for three years." He loves to travel and to be outdoors.

Jeff entered the education track, after he had a severe crisis in his personal life. He was twenty nine years old, and as a mechanic (of sportscars and trucks), became a regional supervisor for Railway Express in Connecticut. He felt that, actually, he was doing nothing.

> It was during Nixon, and I was very politically oriented. I was, you know, a screaming liberal at that time. And I was just sitting there, and I says, you know, "this world is really fucked." And I'm sitting there and I said, "This is it for the rest of my life!. I'm sitting here reading Playboy for the rest of my life, I'm 29 years old." I had already had four children, which I had, you know, brought up, because before I got the supervisor's job, I worked at midnight, so I was at home during the day with my kids, and I used to take them out into the woods, and work with them. I was doing what would be called

> Montessori, you know, teaching, then, with my own children.

Jeff decided that he wanted to get a college education. He took his wife and children, packed everything they needed for camping on a U-Haul trailer, and went to California. He left behind a beautiful duplex home and a secure job, and camped for six months in Canada. The family finally landed in southern California, where Jeff found a school. He studied for six years, and graduated as an ecologist.

Jeff's close family and friends thought that he was out of his mind when he told them about his plan to study.

> I was the first one to be born in a hospital, and I was stepping above my status in life, and in Irish culture you didn't do that. Or in those days, you just didn't do those things. You're going to be a cop, you're going to be a fireman, you're going to be a sanitation worker, you're going to work for ConEdison...

Jeff's relatives were also skeptical about his ability to study. They thought that he was a "total fool" to give up a secure future.

Jeff's wife could not stand the change. She stayed in California for six months and then moved back with their four children to Thornbrook, NY.

> ...the wife came back, the kids came back, the family split up. They caused a divorce. I was so driven, you know, but I always came and all. I took care of the kids. I never let my wife hang in, I never not supported them and all. I never played, I never played the stereotype game of a divorced father abandoning

> his kids indefinitely.
>
> ... It was very traumatic for me, because my youngest daughter was three, and, just like, like I'm in here with these little children, there isn't a moment that doesn't go by, that I don't identify them as my, as my daughters and my son.
> It's an, it's an unconscious thing, but it's not that unconscious.
> These little girls in here, are my little babies, they're my daughters.

The separation from his wife and children was hard for Jeff. He managed to cope with his longings, by keeping the telephone off the hook for hours. The first year, he recollects, was very difficult.

> ... especially on weekday nights. It was almost invariable that I would call them up, all right, and leave the phone off the hook. In my time from eight o'clock to eleven at night, you couldn't get in touch with me in my home.
> My phone was always off the hook because it was connected, I had my phone connected to my wife's home in Thornbrook, NY. And if the kids wanted to talk to me, they just whistled into the phone.
> And I'd say "What?" and we'd talk.
> So I had three hours every... That was the only way that I could get through it. And not be overcome by guilt, and that, those feelings that you have, of not being with the children. All right?
> I mean, I don't give a fuck who you are, or how tough you are emotionally, or psychologically. If you leave four children and a wife, and you don't have any feelings about it, you're comatose mister. You're dead and you don't know it.

Jeff emphasizes that he never neglected his family. He worked in California for six years as a welder's helper, and supported his family back in New York State.

In his last semester in college, Jeff's professor asked him to be his research assistant. The research was about "student alienation and alternative schools, to re-orient children back into the system."

Jeff worked in a high school for two years, although he was not a teacher. During that time, he found the drug problem in High Schools devastating for students and teachers alike. He also found that his knowledge as a mechanic helped him to form a bond with the students, and to distract them from drugs. Jeff found a connection between his sense of accomplishment when he was building an engine, to the joy he had when making a bond with, and influencing, students. Jeff tells about a 17 year old student with whom he rebuilt a TR-3 sportscar.

> ... I stripped his engine down completely, and rebuilt that whole engine. You should have seen the lights on that kids' eyes when that night, that we finished that work, all right, and I mean, the kid even had a bottle of champagne by then, I mean he was so, so self confident.
> We, we pushed the start button and that engine went Varoomm. You should have seen his eyes. A sixteen year old, I mean a seventeen year old kid, he was 17 then. He was so happy I could have gotten him to do anything I wanted. ...
> ... I accomplished two things right there. I built an engine, and I succeeded helping the kid who was on the way into dope.

The drug problem was not the only one that bothered Jeff. He was watching the society around him and was troubled by a moral attitude which he could not stand.

> ... this attitude, this immoral attitude towards other people bothered the hell out of me. You know, the whole attitude "Screw, get what you can out of people and the hell with them, and throw them. Use them if you can. Use them, and abuse them, and lose them."

The research, which Jeff helped to conduct, concluded that after two years, there was no change in the students' values and attitudes. The students were 14 to 17 years old. Jeff found that he had very good rapport with children. He also found that high school was not going to change the students. He could not get a teaching position in high school, because of budget cuts, and eventually left California.

Jeff went by himself to Key West, Florida, and for three months got away from everybody he knew. He spent the time thinking about the issues that bothered him, and finally decided on working with young children. He reached the conclusion that if anything could be done to change people's attitudes, it had to be done in the early years.

> ... as a mechanic. It wasn't much difference for me, from analyzing what's wrong with engines to analyzing what's wrong with education, and working with children. You know, if you can analyze one thing, you can, if you're good at it, you can analyze another thing. Know what I mean? So I just went from analyzing and diagnosing engines to a more philosophical thing of diagnosing a society.
> And trying to find out where the ill was, and trying to fix it.
> Really, trying to fix it, by working with little children.
>
> ... And I had Piaget in mind. Piaget, I liked his attitude, ... what stuck out in my mind was that simple, simple, simple phrase in his book. It was "enrich little mind, enrich mind".
> ... It stuck with me. And it kept coming back to me and coming back to me. And Montessori has this idea. ... this idea of an enriched mind produces an enriched and enlightened mind.
> A child is more open to opinions, and is not close-minded as he grows up in life, you know.

Jeff went back to New York State and studied for three months in a Montessori program. In the meantime, his mother was stricken with cancer and he wanted to be close to her. He got back to New York City and went to the school in which he is teaching now to do a one year internship. It was in 1979. Jeff tells about his feeling when he entered the school for the first time:

> You know, it's a funny thing, that I walked out of that elevator, and I said this is it. I went in there. I was interviewed by four women, and was so relaxed and ease. I felt so, so secure. I never had any doubt that I was not going to have, get this job. I just knew it! I just knew it.

Jeff teaches a class of 21 children, ages 2 1/2 - 6 years old, with two female co-teachers. The majority of the children are four to five years old. In the last two years, Jeff has been running a summer school program. He also teaches an after-school science program which starts in February and culminates in June. Every child builds a rocket and they launch it, on a special occasion, with the parents present, in Central Park. Jeff loves the parents' and children's enthusiasm and enjoys every minute.

Jeff sees his job as making the children happy, and enlarging their world. He keeps updated and reads "all the educational stuff I can get my hands on." He does not rest on his laurels, and regards his work as a constant challenge.

> I'm looking to make these kids happy. ... when I go home in the subway. I'll use that 45 minutes and critique what I did. "What did I do today?" What did I succeed at? Did I help any of these children? And I've gotten it down pat, that I can go through, I can cut through all my bullshit, and all my excuses. And if I'm lazy or hung over, I can cut through all that nonsense, and admit the truth to myself that you didn't do that today, man. Or you did great today, man. Or you should have done this, or you should have done that,. You shouldn't have said this when you did. You know, that kind of a thing. Always critiquing my day, every day, ...

Jeff admits that he is "a little kid that's never grown up". In his story about the submarine (Appendix II), or in his description of launching rockets in Central Park (below), funny and sad elements mingle together. Jeff plays his little games as a means of staying sane, in a city, which is overwhelming in its complexity and contradictions. In this sense, he reminds me of Wemmick in Dickens' "Great Expectations", who, every evening, lifts the drawbridge that leads to his "castle" (home). Jeff does the same. He keeps his childhood memories, and fresh attitude, as islands of sanity in a world which gets more and more baffling and difficult to understand. If Jeff is not looked at through this prism, his humor may appear to be not funny at all. Sometimes, Jeff conveys in his stories, (which are profoundly painful on one hand, and vivacious on the other hand), that black humor is the only remedy. Jeff tells about the rocket launching in Central Park:

> I mean I have fifty sixty parents out. It's gotten, you know it's one of those things that just blew. Sixty parent out there, you know, just screaming and cheering, you know, cause even they're impressed at the height these rockets get. And I love it man!. I mean I have more fun out of it than the kids.
> I love watching them suckers. I even, I get. I carry a screw ladder, and I wait for a helicopter to go flying by, and a helicopter goes by, I launch a rocket, you know, this poor guy, who'd been at Nam goes "OHHh", having a flash back, right. Well I mean, you know, that's a game I play in my head to keep myself happy. You know, you got to in New York City. This place is so crazy, you know. So you gotta have your own place in your mind where you can laugh and have your own little world going on, or you'll go nuts in this town.

Money does not make any difference to Jeff. He always worked hard, but was never "flippant". For him the true sense of accomplishment came through succeeding, as a teacher or as a mechanic, but not through money.

> The whole idea of the Beatles, that Money can't buy you Love. It can't buy you happiness either. It can't. It's surprising. I inherited a lot of money when my mother died.
> Didn't make a goddamned bit of difference in my life, man.
> ... I'm still the same thing. I do the same things. I'm still the same person. I curse just as much, you know. My ah, I wash dishes the same way. Walk the same, talk the same, act the same. Doesn't impress me. Doesn't impress ME.

Jeff feels that, since 1976, the year he started working in education, he has found his natural and designated place in the world.

> And I know I found my niche man, I found my niche. The whole idea of an organism finding its niche.
>
> ... Gosh, it's going to be a breeze for me. I have not worked, I, really, I have not perceived myself as working, all right, since I stopped working as a mechanic, as a welder's helper, when I was going to college.
> The day I started to work on that Federal Research grant, in 1976, that's when I graduated, that's when I stopped working. I retired from the work world.
> I'm doing what I want to do in life. I am not working right now. I am not working all day here.
> I'm enjoying myself, ...

Jeff did not remarry. He lived seven years with a girlfriend in California, and three years with a girlfriend in NYC, but does not want more children of his own. He keeps in touch with his children to this day.

> ... if I had got a family, ah, 19.., in 1970 with the girl I lived with in California, that child, that child would be eligible to be in the Persian Gulf right now.
> So, ah, I already have four kids, and they're all grown up. They're all successful. Everything's fine. Why push it?

Jeff, 50, has his own upbringing, and his life experience as a father of three daughters and a son, to guide him in his work. He uses his age and experience as sources of authority with the parents. Some parents, Jeff professes, are intimidated by his behavior. Some are respectful. It is quite clear, that few are indifferent.

Jeff's behavior with the parents, and his ideas about discipline and toilet training, may seem controversial at times. In some cases, Jeff may appear to be too much of a disciplinarian with the parents and the children. The reason for controversy may lie in Jeff's contradictory characteristics. There is a unique blend in Jeff's personality. There are harshness and kindness, roughness and sensitivity, grief and joy. Jeff can be the "worst curser in the world," and at the same time, can bring tears to your eyes when describing the separation from his children. He can be rough with a parent who is scared of toilet training, but can lend a helping hand when the parent feels overwhelmed by the burden of raising a child.

Jeff is the most colorful of all the informants. He is the oldest and has the most varied experience.

He has many characteristics which can associate him with a type of a masculine man. His "tough" characteristics: the emphasis on individuality, adventure, and risk taking; the courage to be at the front, be it the military, or social change; the choice of his professions: a sailor, a mechanic and racer of sportscars; and the rough language, which includes a lot of cursing.

Besides the "tough" characteristics, Jeff has gentle ones which complement, and even contradict the "tough" side. Jeff conveys sensitivity, warmth, friendliness, open heartedness, and humor. He is smart, curious, and full of life. He is devoted to his family, although he does not live with his children. He chose a profession which contradicts male sex-roles and which is typically feminine.

Jeff is the most "masculine" of the informants, the one who made the biggest jump between his male image and the "feminine" image of Early Childhood Education.

Yet, a closer look at Jeff's biography, reveals that he was always at the frontline of change. He fought in a war, and then protested against it. He dared to go to college when his community discouraged it. He went on to teach young children, when it was almost unheard of for male teachers.

Jeff, who came from an Irish-Catholic community, has shed part of its values, but kept some of them vigorously. He has deep respect for parents. He believes that children should be part of a family frame, and should not be allowed to dominate it. He believes in the community's obligation to care for its members, and is appalled by cynicism, abuse, and neglect. He conveys the individual's moral obligation to fight society's illnesses, and oppose indifference and corruption.

Jeff stirs so much emotion, because he personifies the changes which society has gone through in the last fifty years. He represents traditional values of respect for the family, but at the same time, caused his own family to break up in order to pursue his own dream. He was almost an embodiment of manliness, and then he made a career change to a profession in which men were unheard of.

Jeff brings in "traditional" values and, at the same time, he is at the frontline of change. It is his being both "there" and "here", that makes him so interesting and complex to grasp.

As will be detailed in the Summary section, he is also the informant, who may provoke the most varied responses. The section about Jeff's Relationships with Parents, may best reflect the controversy. As stated earlier, the present study is not judgmental in any sense, as far as the teaching is concerned. Yet, I am aware of the criticism Jeff's behavior may evoke. As will be discussed later, part of the criticism may concern the very essence of this paper. I was, therefore, more than grateful to have Jeff's story, intriguing and controversial as he may seem.

Relationships with Teachers

Jeff describes the teachers' first reaction to him as "apprehensive". It took his colleagues some time to get used to him.

> At first they were totally freaked by me, because I have a tendency to be, ah, loud, street, attitude. I don't put on airs. I do a lot of of cursing, with adults. I mean I could be one of the worst cursers in the world,...

But, Jeff adds, he was lucky to work with very supportive women, and except for one case, which will be detailed, he has not encountered women who resented him.

Jeff emphasizes that nobody has ever told him, in eleven years, how to teach. "I do it my way, or I will leave. You don't tell me how to teach." Jeff has been working with the same two teachers for nine years, and he praises the good teamwork.

> Sara, I and Catherine, have worked together for nine years, I believe. We don't have to talk to each other any more. I mean we read each other's minds. We just know each other's routines. We've all delegated to each other responsibility and we all work in particular areas.
> ... Sara will do language with them, Catherine do, art work and things like that, I'll be taking over the science stuff, and the math. I'll take over the computer stuff.
> ... I don't try and monopolize the demonstrations. I demonstrate something every week, and it's always Jeff doing the demonstration. I'm very self-conscious that we all share and all demonstrate something so the children could see us as equals.

Jeff gets tremendous support from his director, although he admits that he blows up whenever he feels that things are not going the way they should. The arguments with Shirley, the director, although fierce at times, are on a professional basis.

> ... I have such loyalty to this joint, for giving me the opportunity for doing this for the rest of my life, that I feel very protective. And if I see Shirley fucking off on her job, not sticking up for the teachers, or not thinking of the students, all right, putting the dollar sign, where a child should be, I blow my stack.

Jeff mentions one teacher who is resentful of him. The resentment emerged when Jeff's name was mentioned in an article about summer programs in NYC.

> ... she read it, and she got this look on her face, like it's always the fucking man that get notice. And never a woman. Why didn't they mention any other women in the article? And I looked at her, and it took me about thirty seconds to realize that she was taking this thing in a very unprofessional way.
> And I says: "Did it ever occur to you, maybe they didn't ever do anything worth writing about?"
> ... She's 29 years old. Has that whole attitude, thinks the world is going to be served up to you on a silver platter, when you find out, like my age, 50, that you have to earn every motherfucking piece of luck. You have to earn it man. And you have to re-earn it, and re-earn it, and re-earn it.

Jeff thinks that the teacher who resents him is not a good teacher to begin with, because she lacks the required qualifications. His harsh criticism of her reflects his opinion about what a teacher should be.

> ... She has difficulty controlling children as a group.
> And if she can't control them, she has a tendency to run away from them.
> You know, ... when there is a pressure on her, she just can't seem to deal with it. ... but that's her.
> It's easy to say I don't particularly like her. I don't think she's worth a fuck, to be absolutely honest with you, I just don't. She's not a teacher.
> Just because you have a piece of paper, doesn't mean you're a teacher.

Relationship with Children

Jeff is undoubtedly the most school-oriented teacher I have interviewed, in the sense that he regards his program as a place where he tries to teach, and the students are supposed to learn as much as possible. But let there be no mistakes: Jeff is aware of his students' capabilities. He does not want his students to write or read or count. All he wants to do is to make the children happy, to widen their experience, and to prepare them for the more structured environment of elementary school. The program consists of morning and afternoon classes, where the morning is more "liberal and eclectic", and the afternoon is more structured. Jeff portrays his attitude to one of the activities in the afternoon.

> ... if we do those words on the board, then they have to sit down around the room, and write those words down. I don't give a goddamn what those words look like.
> I don't care if the kid is writing them backwards. I don't care if he's writing one word to a page, or one letter to a page, and putting "O" over here, turning it over and putting "N" on the back and getting another piece of paper and putting "E".
> ... All I want them to do is get into the rhythm. Get into the routine.
> He's getting into some kind of a structure.
> ... And then you give them a lot of encouragement. You give them a lot of feedback after they've done it...

I asked Jeff about his youngest students, the 2 1/2 year olds, and he says that in the first two to three months in school, their first task is socialization. For his part, Jeff is observing and learning the children's behavior. He uses the older children to assist the young ones in the process of toilet training, and with the assignments in class. At the beginning, the young children have the "Candy Store" attitude. They go from one activity to the other, but their main concern is social. They try to find their place in the group, make a bond with another child, and learn the rules of the place. Only when they have settled down, are they ready to focus their attention on particular tasks.

> ... I'm very cautious in the beginning. What I do, is hardly ever say anything to them.
> ... and then I go ahead and start making overtures to the child. Most of the time, the overtures I make will be unveiled in humor. I see it as a gift, a beautiful gift.

Jeff says that, "to me there's no such thing as play, it's all learning experience." In the program, he lets the children have control over what they are doing. If a child is engaged in an activity and the program needs to stop it, Jeff insists on giving the child the opportunity to finish his activity. Jeff taps into the children's immediate interest, to make connections to the topics he has planned to introduce.

Jeff admits that his own children resonate in his students. He respects and treats his students as he had his own children. Jeff is aware of not making value judgements, which he considers as the worst thing to do.

> I went through this this afternoon. With Angie. I mean with Jill. I says, "One of the things that drive me up the wall is cleaning up after other people."
> "So please, don't spill your juice. Watch where your arms and elbows are." I turn around, it's all over the

> table. Jill was looking at me with her innocent little face, you know, like, Oh oh, Oh oh. ... I just go over there, get some brown paper towels, and clean it up. The kid looks at me. That's it?
> You mean, you're not going to say "You're a klutz, do something", you know. Whoop, just go get some brown paper towels, and clean it up. We've got five minutes left, and Jerry wants to show us his fools' gold.

Jeff prefers the four to six year olds, because he feels less a disciplinarian and more of a teacher with them. For him, working with the very young is a compromise he has to make because of the structure of the program.

> I prefer the four, I prefer the four to six years old, simply because, they've already assimilated the rules. It's a matter of convenience for me.
> In other words, I can teach more (to) the four to six year old. In the morning I'm more of the disciplinarian, playing cop. ... Keeping things under control, guiding kids here, guiding kids there.
> But in the afternoon, I don't have to do that stuff. I don't have to worry about a couple of kids, like the one I told you, who's four years old, acting like a two, who likes to go around climbing on chairs, climbing on the windows, punching, hitting kids, walking over other kids' work. I don't have to worry about that bullshit in the afternoon.

Jeff says the most stressful for him is when he cannot make a bond with a child, or with his parents. He remembers a four year old who, eight years ago, was painting swastikas in school (which is located in a synagogue). Jeff spoke with the child and with the parents, but to no avail. The experience was painful for him, and he recollects it in detail.

> I flipped out! What the fuck you doing? You're on a temple, you don't make swastikas on a Jewish temple, for Christ's sakes!

Jeff's greatest satisfaction is when children give him feedback, and are interested in what he is doing. He loves "watching the lights go on with these kids." He is delighted when the children are confident enough to express their own ideas.

> When I start to talk about the dinosaurs the other day, the last week, and I says: "Well everybody has got theories about what dinosaurs were doing on earth." You know, blah blah,blah.
> I tell them "My favorite theory, because flowers killed the dinosaurs, plants started to develop flowers, all right, to produce more plants, all right, but they also put out a toxin that protected the flowers. The dinosaurs ate up the flowers...
> ... Then this little nimble guy says "Yes, Jeff. But it also could have been a volcano. Wonder... Now he's telling me. This is what I like. The child is starting to teach me. ...
> ... If the volcanos explode they will give off all sorts of dust. That would make it dark, and if it was dark, that would affect the plants, and if we don't have plants, then the animals can't eat. And if we don't have animals, we die.
> .. And I'm going, that's it. That's the end of the lesson. And "BAboom, Taana" Right? This is what makes me happy. Then I can get up, and say "I'm doing great! I'm doing great!"

Relationships with Parents

Jeff acknowledges that his relationships with the parents are based on the way he was brought up. Jeff sees a great difference between the way his parents had treated him, (and the way he had treated his own children), and the way the parents of children in the school, treat their offspring.

Jeff was brought up in a world where children respected their parents, fitted into the family frame. What he sees today is parents who are scared of their children, and children who dominate their families' lives.

Jeff has great awareness of the social reality. He understands the parents' wish for their children to be successful, and thinks that school has to adapt its curriculum to the parents' needs. He has sympathy for parents who have to work, manage tight schedules, and take care of their families. At the same time, Jeff is serious about the children's studies in school, and does not hesitate to rebuke parents who continuously do not bring their children on time, causing them to miss classes.

> ... So at quarter to ten, if they're not here, tough. I put a sign on the door that says "Don't Disturb". I lock the door.
> That usually gets the point across to the consistently late parents.
> And it does make them understand. And then I go right to them, and I says, "Listen, your kid's losing out. You're paying for it, your kid is losing out."
> "He doesn't know half the children in the classroom. He doesn't understand how to use half these materials, simply because you keep bringing in the kid late. Now, I'm not a babysitter, and if you keep doing that, I'd prefer you not bringing your kid in at all next year."
> Shirley goes crazy when I do this to her. But I find parents, nine times out of ten, they're not resentful. First, they get their feelings... First I hurt their feelings, and then they understand that I'm really helping their kid. Then they come back and say "I'm really sorry, man."

Jeff does not hesitate to intervene when he sees a child who is disrespectful to his parent. It contradicts what Jeff tries to do in school. He has a lot of power with the children and he uses it as a tool in his educational work.

> When you get into that door, democracy ends and dictatorship begins. I'm a benevolent dictator, and I like the philosopher-king. I'd love to be a

> philosopher-king, but at this stage, I'm only a benevolent dictator. I, that's the position I take. And I even take it with parents.
> I chastise parents. I have no qualms about jumping on a parent's ass and getting on their case. I'll come in and says, a kid will come in there, give their parent their lunch box, and tell their parent to go put it in the refrigerator. I says "What the hell are you doing?" I work all day to make these children self-reliant, and then you go over there and kiss his ass. I says, give him the lunch box. Tell him to put it in there himself. It's his job. It's his lunch box. Period.

Jeff is deeply irritated when he sees a child, especially a boy, hitting his mother. Jeff thinks that such a behavior may have serious consequences as a child grows up to be an adult. He explains it to the parent:

> ... Don't you understand what you're setting off here, that if he's allowed to beat you to vent his frustration, what the fuck there is to say that he won't do that when he is an adult, and he comes home some night, and beats the shit out of his wife, because he had a bad day on the job, and he has learned in some unconscious thing that he doesn't remember from childhood, that if you want to vent your frustrations, you punch, you punch a woman in her mouth. I mean, there's a possibility that you're encouraging it, Honey, and you're standing there, letting him do those things to you." You don't do that. You don't hit your mother. Then I jump on the kid "You don't hit your mother."

Jeff regards toilet training for the youngest students as the "base line" for their independence. The parents are therefore asked, to have their children toilet trained by the time they are two and a half. In class, Jeff uses the bigger children to take the little ones to the bathroom.

> I'll take the five year old kid, that's been here a year, possible two years, and I'll have him and her, or her work with that very young child. We have one in

> here, Anne. She's two and a half probably. When she first got here she was wearing diapers.
> Now, like I told you, I ain't no nursery school. I don't change no diapers. All right. That's the first thing I told her. I says "Hey, honey, I don't change diapers, so you better get on the ball. If this kid's two and a half years old, and not out of diapers yet, this child is not mature enough emotionally, and does not have control of their own body to be in here. All right. They're just not ready, honey." Ah, I use that as a base line sometimes. I don't believe in this. It just seems to work.
> It's easy to be intimidated enough to get the parents off their ass.
> And encourage the children to use the toilet instead of lazing this. You know, nine times out of ten, it's because a parent is too busy, and doesn't have enough patience, and doesn't have enough knowledge of how to toilet train a child.

Jeff says that he treats parents with respect, but at the same time he is very strict. He gets responses of admiration and appreciation. Yet, some of the parents say he intimidates them. Jeff admits that he has no hesitations to rebuke parents, but at the same time, he gives them all the advice he can.

> I've had one woman come down, one morning last year. She's coming crying on my shoulder. "Oh, I don't know what to do with myself. I'm an abusive mother." I said "What the hell do you mean?" She said, "I just picked up Martin, and threw him across the room into the couch".
> I says "Why? What the hell did you do that for?" She says, "Well I just found out this morning that my grandfather has died, my best friend had died three days ago, all right, and I just, it just got to me, and Martin was coming up with some picayune bullshit, some petty, you know, I forgot, something petty, and I just couldn't take it, and I just went crazy. I just, exploded. I said, "Martin, not now", and I threw him right into the couch. Leave me alone. I just couldn't cope. The pressure got to me." I said, "You're not an abusive mother, hon. You're just emotionally, you're just an emotional basket case."
> And I got her to laugh about that, you know.

Jeff uses the bigger children in the afternoon program as assistant teachers. The children help their peers and have responsibilities in class. When a child misbehaves, Jeff "fires" her/him to get his message across. When parents complain about discipline problems at home, Jeff uses the ties between school and home.

> Or they come when they don't know how to deal with a situation like, "How do I deal with it, when my kid doesn't listen to me at all?" you know.
> I says, "Well tell them that you'll tell me about it, and then I'll fire her, as an Assistant Teacher, cause Ellen isn't here in the afternoon, and I take these kids in as Assistant Teachers. I says "You're my Assistant". The position makes them proud. All right. But then if they screw up, I fire them. I have four year olds fired. You know, you're on your way. I have them coming back to me "Please, please, please, I'll do anything you say. I'll do anything you say." "Just hire me." OHHH,

Jeff thinks that the majority of the children he takes care of are spoiled, and he does not mean in the monetary sense. Jeff blames the parents, who do not set limits in time, and who let the children rule their lives.

> Instead of playing it the proper way, setting them, ... showing the child its place among the family group, they let the child control the family group.

The parents, according to Jeff, set the limits too late, and therefore, lose. The way to discipline, says Jeff, is to be clear and consistent.

> ... The main thing is consistency in, just how use my voice. I use my eyes, my physical, the way I look.. I let the child know when I'm mad. I let them know.
> But I'm also consistent. I don't say you're wrong, you

> can't do it one day, and you can the next.
> The children know with me, what they can and cannot do, and they don't even bother asking me. Or if I say "No" to them, that's the end of it. It's not like they don't want it, plead, and have stroke, and all that kind of bullshit, lay down, and beat on the floor. They know that's not going to help.

From what Jeff has observed, the parents' and the child's personality are equally involved in the child's behavioral problems. Jeff thinks that parents, nowadays, are scared of their children, but he admits, that his observations are personal and not scientific. He is using his experience as a guide, along with other resources he has. One of them is the way he was brought up, and it was very different from what he sees now. Jeff does not understand why parents are afraid of losing their children's love if they discipline them.

> I see a lot of mothers letting their children discipline them. They acquiesce authority. They're scared to lose the love of the child. I never understood that. To this day, I don't understand that. I never did it with my children, and they still respected me and loved.. I mean I was brought up: "You respect adults".
> That's how I was raised.
> ... And, ah.. You don't talk back to adults, you don't smartmouth adults.

Gender - Child Abuse

Jeff says that he is very much aware of the possibility that someone might accuse him of child abuse.

> ... I know there's always going to be somebody who

> sees that. It's always the little girls that seem, keep running after me. And have a great, great deal of affection for me, tell me how much they love me. And I do, that's the male-female thing.

Jeff mentions the issue of child abuse only once, when asked about the scarcity of male teachers. Jeff thinks that the possible accusation of child abuse is intimidating, but says that he is not intimidated, just conscious of the threat.

Jeff thinks that some of the extreme sensitivity in the USA for the issue of child abuse has to do with the Christian sensitivity about sexuality, in general. He regards the Christian sensitivity as ridiculous, and gives an example of a research about children's sexuality. The research was conducted by John Hopkins University, and was filmed in a Kibbutz, in Israel.

> Sexuality in children that young, that, ... I guess, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants or Catholics could not, just could not cope, with watching a child four years old fondle a genitals, or, or, or acting out a sexual intercourse with a female and a male, four years old boy. "Just get the freaking fuck out! They flipped out with this, you know. They had to take the research to a kibbutz in Israel to do it. ...
> ... It was on film. They were showing you the film. It was done beautiful. Oh, it was a great thing to watch. Here was this little boy, little girl four five years old, under a sheet. And you see the little girl say, "let's make a baby". So then you see the little boy imitating sexual intercourse, right, bang-a-bang-a-bang-a-, and then all of the sudden it stops. She goes over and says, "I think we made a baby now." You know. You know, it was just taken, the children fondling themselves, exploring their genitals, ...
> ... And if that was done in New York City, if that was done in Canada, they would have been completely "Oh don't touch yourself, tatitatitatii".

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

Jeff does not like and did not like the term "Nursery School". He thinks that the term itself is contradictory to what he is doing as a male teacher in school. He regards his work as nurturing and teaching, and admits that the term "Nursery School" irritates him as a man.

> ... even now, I get uptight with that word "Nursery School". We don't nurse children here, you know. We nurture. We don't nurse them, so I really had to take objection to that. And I don't know if that's a chauvinist attitude, or a sexist attitude. I just don't do it.
> And I resent the fact that you treat a man, they're not babies anymore.

Jeff felt that his interview (when he entered the school), was so thorough, partly because he was a man. Eleven years ago, he says, it was very unusual for a man to work in an Early Childhood setting.

Jeff says that he loves working with women. He feels lucky, and does not want to ruin the good relationships in work by making sexual overtures to the female teachers: "Why kill it by being sexist. Why kill it by being a lech?"

Jeff says that he had worked with men in the military, and as a mechanic, and he prefers to work with women. He sees the work with young children as a challenge to men who want to do it. Jeff bases his conviction on his own life experience. He says that he really settled down only when he was 40 years old, and therefore, had the perspective of working in different settings. Jeff feels that teaching young children is a "golden opportunity for a man who is talented and wants to dedicate himself". He was very conscious of the lack of men in the field, and saw the opportunity that it gave him to express himself.

Jeff thinks that being a male gives him an immediate advantage when working with young children.

> My advantage is being a man, they instinctively think I'm the boss.
> All right? I use it, but I don't abuse that.
> And I do reinforce the fact that they have just as much power as I do. But there seems to be something in young children, even at that age of two and a half to three, that if you're a man, they perceive you in a power position.

The difficulty of the female teachers to be disciplinarians is connected, according to Jeff, to the emotional stress mothers experience when they have to discipline their children. This is a situation where Jeff thinks he can help mothers. It is hard for the mothers to be disciplinarians, but it is different for him as a male teacher.

> ... You gotta remember this is a mother who spent nine months with some kind of anxiety, and then being ripped open in the groin.
> And then all of a sudden, had to nurse this child, and wet this child, and diaper this child, blahblahblah.
> So there is a strong bond there.
> So I take, I think it's a lot more difficult for the mother to be a disciplinarian to something so close to them emotionally.
> That she might hurt, might make cry. It's hard for mothers to do that. And that's where I step in.

Jeff says he particularly encourages the girls' interest in science for two main reasons. The first is that he admits to being prejudiced with girls, since he has three daughters. The second is that Jeff feels there are not enough women in science, and he regards the scarcity as a result of sex role stereotyping.

> ... It's just (one) of those particulars I have about science. There's not enough women in it. ...
> ... There was myth that they were high school girls, and when they get into high school, they don't have the brains to do math and science.
> This myth, this attitude persisted, and they would, they would take a boy, in deference to a girl. In other words, the boy had ninety, the girl had ninety, on the test, the boy got it. Because he was boy.
> If there was two opening, the boy got the opening in deference to the girl in biology class, cause nine times out of ten, the girl would be perceived as going "Oough! A frog! You mean I gotta cut it open? Oughhh, I have to touch it Oughh." All right? The boy would go "Out of sight. Let's cut his guts open, man". That these perceptions were, you know, just maintained, bothered me. I says, I could do something about that.

I asked Jeff about his insight in reference to the scarcity of male teachers in Early Childhood Education. He replied that image, and fear of being accused of child abuse, keep men away.

> Ah, it's, it's image. You must be a fag, or maybe a you're a pedophile, or maybe ah, ah you're just ah, you're not good enough to work in, I don't know. I think the two main things is a man's, a males's insecurity and image. And I think the male, basically, if they think they are going to be perceived as feminine, some respect, homosexual, maybe by some macho guy in a bar, or they may perceived and suspiciously looked at by other people as a pedophile by some respect, or a sexual pervert.

Jeff hints about the change in social attitude towards male's role, when he tells about his divorce, twenty years ago; "... in those days, it was unheard for the man to have the children."

Summary

Jeff, fifty years old, and a father of four children, tells an interesting and intriguing story. The special feature of Jeff's tale, besides its fabulous panoramic scope, is its portrayral of the great move, which the most "masculine" of the informants, had made when he chose to work in the "feminine" world of Early Childhood Education.

Jeff's behavior with the children and parents, may raise the question whether he is too rough with them, too direct, too "masculine".

The focus in our discussion should not be whether or not Jeff behaves in a proper manner when he "fires" a four year old student, or demands that parents toilet train their child at 2 1/2 years. Rather, the focus should be on how society accepts the masculine characteristics that Jeff represents. How do the parents react to Jeff's "right to the point" attitude? How do the teachers react to his energetic, critical approach? How does society react to a "masculine" sailor, a mechanic of sportscars and adventurer, who decides to go and teach in a "feminine" domain?

To me, the heart of the matter is, that the controversy which Jeff may raise, points to the age old war between the sexes. What Jeff does, is to bring a very "masculine" quality into a very "feminine" field. The waves he stirs are wonderful, not because the males teachers' approach should be "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better", but because it should be "Anything You Can Do , I

Do With a Different Touch". The approach should be not toward the androgynous solution, but towards the "Vive le Difference" approach. In other words, a man is a man, and a woman is a woman. It does not matter if society goes into the equality of the sexes in any imaginable direction. What matters is that differences exist, and the children, should have the experiences of interacting with both male and female teachers.

The controversy Jeff's figure may raise, is the essence of the present paper. At it's deepest, the controversy points to the difference between male and female behaviors. The children, in any case, should benefit from these very differences.

Leonard

Biography

Leonard, 30 years old, was born in Sioux City, Iowa, and is the second child in a family of six children. Leonard describes his family as "pretty liberal". His late father was a cellist and his mother is a pianist. His brothers and sisters grew up to be musicians and artists, and he has played the cello since the age of ten.

When Leonard was seventeen, he went to Illinois and studied music for two years. He moved to Cleveland for four years, and earned his B.A. in music. When he was twenty three, he moved to NYC to study for his M.A. in music, and now he is working on his PhD.

Leonard comments on the moves that brought him to NYC:

> ... it was a kind of gradual transitions from small towns, to medium sized towns, to ah, big city, to biggest city.

Through the years, Leonard has taught cello to various ages. His youngest students were seven to eight, and the oldest fifty to sixty. Three years ago, Leonard decided to teach young children. Since then, he has been working part time with a group of two to five year olds. He has always been a head teacher and has an assistant. At times, his group had eleven to twelve children, but now there are five to six students in his group. His current music students range in age between seven and eighteen years old. As a musician, he earns three times more than he does as an educator, but he likes the combination.

When Leonard was in college, he took a course in Children's Literature, and loved it. He decided to go into education because he needed additional income, and he wanted work that would complement the music. He thought that working with young children would suit him, and found this true. He immediately felt comfortable, and had good rapport with the children.

Leonard has had an encouraging response from his family about his choice:

> L. I would say the family reaction was good, because, ah, I'd come from a big family, and pretty liberal family, and there was always a lot of, ... teaching and learning going on, in our households. So, for me to become a teacher was a pretty natural thing.
>
> D. You said "Teaching". What do you mean? Teaching in the household?
>
> L. Well, ahm, music lessons, and you know, my father would help me to practice on the cello, my mother would help my brother to learn the piano. And there were six children in the family, and most all of them were taking some kind of lesson or another. So, there was always this ongoing process of ah, learning going on in the house. Learning music, and, and learning art, and other, ... arts related things. It was kind of the story of our house.

Some of Leonard's friends wondered whether it was better for him to dedicate himself solely to music, but he thinks that the equilibrium of playing and teaching music, plus teaching young children, is good. Leonard admits that sometimes the work with the children is exhausting, but in the long run "it keeps your attitude very fresh and open."

Leonard thinks that children are neglected in society, and since he has a gift of working with them, he feels almost obligated to do it.

D. Where do you see the neglect?
L. Well, in the area that I think children are just forced to grow up, so early, that they're confronted with so much violence and, sex, and this graphic reality, at such an early age.
So much killing, and, really negative stimulation at such an early age. Especially in a big city like this. You just hear stories of grade school age children walking into school with guns and stuff. Without really knowing what a gun is, and what it can do. Somehow they're, they're able to get hold of these things, and, plus, you know, a lot of them, well they see on the street people that are, ... intoxicated.. And decrepit. It's shocking to me to see some of the people that we see on the street here, and I, I just can't get over the kind of affect it must have, and kind of ah, fear it must instill in some very young children, to see some, some of the deranged people, just wandering free in the city, ...

The responses Leonard gets from the children encourage his conviction. He feels that his work makes the city "a more positive place for young people", and he finds it "immensely satisfying".

Leonard is unmarried and lives in Manhattan. His hobbies are collecting old children's books and musical instruments.

Leonard, who tends to be more reclusive as far as adults are concerned, opens up when he speaks about children. He describes beautiful activities that he has done with the children, and conveys deep enjoyment of their creativity and openness. In the children's company, Leonard sheds his logical serious mood, and lets himself be playful.

Leonard has a keen eye for the children's moods and adjusts himself accordingly. He is aware of the children's capabilities, and has great satisfaction in watching their progress.

For Leonard, a professional musician, and the only part time teacher among the informants, the interaction with the children is the greatest source of satisfaction, and the main incentive for teaching

Relationships with Teachers

Leonard recollects that he had to learn the different styles of the teachers when he started to work. There is a high turnover in school; the director and he have been at the school the longest.

Leonard praises the director's choice of teachers.

> ... the director, Joan, tends to, to pick people that, (have) kind of artistic bend. That's kind of a thrust of her school.
> So, generally, people that she has picked for the job, are ... pretty easy going, and open minded type of people, ...

Leonard feels appreciated by the other teachers. Sometimes, he even feels a professional jealousy because of his success with the children. Leonard compares his work with the teachers to work within an orchestra, and draws great satisfaction when he feels the music flowing.

> ... the other teachers might get an idea from me, and I might get an idea from them. And ... that's almost like a, as a musician, playing chamber music, playing with fellow musicians, ... it's almost like a form of chamber

> music, without the musical instruments, working with other teachers, in a good way. I, I haven't had any real bad experiences with other teachers, ...

Leonard appreciates the staff meetings and the good channels of communication among the teachers. As it will be described later, he has high regard for the school's parent-teacher conferences as well.

> ... once a month the teachers have a staff meeting with the director. We just hear the months activity, the upcoming months' activities, and I think that's an important., That serves an important functions just ... to keep all the teachers and the director of one mind, in how the school is running. So just, we just touch bases as to what, what are the goals of the school, and, how we're going to achieve those. Sometimes we do extra activities, of ..., not really critiquing each other, but giving each other, kind of positive, re-enforcement, what we feel the other teacher is doing well, how we feel they might improve.

Relationships with Parents

Leonard perceives parental response to him as positive. Yet, he is aware of the child abuse issue and mentions it openly.

> I've had a really good response. Usually they're really thankful that there is a male teacher there, that the child can develop, ... an equal relationship with a male teacher figure as with a female teacher figure.
> And they're thankful that, that's, that's the case. And sometimes they'll, come right out and thank you for that, for being there. And ..., a lot of times they wanted to acknowledge that there's anything different about you, than about another teacher. I think, at this time in history, ah, you know, seems like three of four years ago, there were a couple of cases, when that..
> You know, cases of child molestation in ah, and I think for a time, that may have caused some parents to

> be, ..., a little extra wary, and just a little more, just watching a little more closely than, maybe, they were watching other teachers, a female teacher. But I, I would say, I haven't sensed any kind of problem, or any kind of suspicion like that, recently, as much as say two or three years ago, ...

Leonard says that he was faced with rejection by a parent only once. But, he says, it was the sole incident in three years of teaching (1).

Relationships with Children

Leonard feels comfortable with children, because he enjoys their openness and lack of formality. For him, it is a relief from the highly formalized music world to which he devotes most of his time. He prefers not to make value judgements with the children, and instead, enjoys their creativity. Leonard gets warm responses from the children, and tries to follow their ideas while working in class. He describes his work as part planned and part improvised.

> Right now, there's a lot of interest in various comic book characters, like Spiderman, or Superman, or say, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are very popular right now.

---

1. See in detail in the "Gender - Child Abuse" section.

> So, we might make a project out of that. Say a Spiderman project that we do outside. Take a huge ball of yarn, and then go outside and wring it between ahm, things that are very far away, posts, and different things in the playground that we're using, and make a huge spiderweb out of yarn, and then carry them around as if flying on the, ... spiderweb.

Leonard feels that the children's creativity in language and play inspires his music. He explains that he is inspired by the unexpected connections which children make while talking. Leonard listens carefully to the children's language, and by "bouncing it back at them," gets them to say more and more. He uses the children's language as leverage to interact with them and to make new activities.

> ... a lot of times a kid will say something like ...a "Bite Chair" or something.
> And rather than tell him that's there's no such thing as a Bite Chair, we have picture of what a Bite Chair is, or ... Just in a kind of innocent symbol language.

Leonard is responsive to the children's interest in physical activity. He is aware of the safety issue, but at the same time, enjoys the activity and regards the physical movement, as one of the benefits of work. For him, it is a good opportunity to exercise, which otherwise he feels, is "neutral" and detached.

> They always like to be, ... swung around, and jump up and down..
> Which, you know, have to be done very carefully. Ah, but, I think it's definitely something that is good for them. Just the physical activities a lot of times..

Leonard has an acute sensitivity to what the children are interested in, and says that a teacher has to adjust very quickly to the children's rhythm. When Leonard describes this rhythm, he snaps his fingers, as if counting the beat of a tune. He adjusts his activities according the children's interest, the changing weather, and the themes in school.

> L. After the big storm that we had a few days ago, we have a water table, in the school, which is, say, a two foot, by five foot table, that has a sunken plastic base in it.
> And we brought several loads of fresh snow from the outside, and we filled the table up with the snow, and then we took food coloring, and mixed it with water, and poured it into the snow, in different places, and then, you know, gradually...
> D. Wow! So they saw the colors diffusing.
> L. Right. Right, they were really fascinated with that. I mean, I managed to sustain that project for almost, probably forty five minutes or so, which is a long... A long time for a kid of that age, but after it begun to be more melted and able to be formed, then we took bowls and smaller bases and we formed a ---- first mountains, and then we made a cake, a snow cake, which we put birthday candles on, and we had a birthday ceremony with this little cake,...

Leonard is aware of the children's capability for musical activities, and tries to give the children as many opportunities as possible to experiment with music. He provides the children with instruments which they can use: drums, xylophones, tambourines, small pianos, etc. The instruments are used in different activities, so that the children can have more of an exposure to the music.

> Well, I do a combination of, of planned curriculum, where I'll sit down beforehand and have an idea, about say, a musical project, and then teach them a song, or

> bring my cello in, and play for them, or a combination of that, and then, just going in and improvising different arts and music projects with them. ...
> ... with the very young children, there's only a certain amount that you can do. So, ... I try to teach them, ah, songs, that, popular children's songs and some songs that they don't know, and sometimes just improvisation with the instruments, where they are say, marching around the room, or sometimes using the instruments as a sounds affect accompany to a story. Or, we occasionally done some kind of a dramatic production, where, we would use a combination of music, and costumes, and you know, ah lighting and sets. Some kind of production with the children.

Leonard can discern something special in every age group that he is teaching in school, and makes a connection between the behaviors he sees in the very young children, and his oldest students of eighteen years old. The charm of children, says Leonard, is that they do not suppress their emotions as adults do.

> And, I think by watching, the children and how they react so openly with their emotions to a ... threat from another child, to any kind of stimulation. ... They're so open. There's so much openness in their, in their laughter, or in their crying, or in their fear. ... and as an adult, ... you somehow learn ... how to suppress a lot of these things, and not show them for fear of being ...
> ... viewed as weak or as not being an adult.
> ... you can see all the different gradations of emotion in children, many of which I think are kind of smoothed over in adulthood, and repressed in some unhealthy ways.

Leonard describes various reasons for stress in work with young children. Sometimes, he feels that he is spending too much time as a "babysitter" and not as an actual teacher. Leonard wonders whether he would not have been more effective as a cello teacher, than as a teacher of very young children.

> Well, the music is more specialized, and ... that's where my main training is in, so, sometimes, I feel if I'm not using that completely, than ... I'm unfair to myself, but at the same time, part of my job with the young children is to teach them music, and I feel like ... I have still some room to improve as a teacher of music to very young children.

Leonard finds that work is exhaustive. He emphasizes the role of the assistant teacher as the one who enables the teacher to focus on the teaching activities, rather than being constantly involved in cleaning up or keeping the group together.

Leonard portrays the reasons that cause him satisfaction in work. The first and most important is the feedback he gets from the children and parents.

> Well, I would say, ... just from the joy that you feel, coming to you from the children. And you know, you get, feed back from the parents too. Because a lot of times, the children would go home and talk about what they did at school. And, so, you get a certain amount of satisfaction from hearing from ... parents that the, children like you as a teacher.

The second cause for satisfaction is the progress the children make in school.

> ... it's very satisfying just to see a child progress from a stage where he or she doesn't have any kind of ... a group experience, You know, say, a child of two or three years old, who has never really been out of the home. And, ... to see ... the child progress from that stage to a stage where they know about sharing, and ... helping another child, or taking part in a group situation and making a contribution, ... I mean, ... that's a big stage for a little kid to go through. To understand that he can still be part of a group, without always being the center of attention.

> ... a child would have some particular area that he can improve upon in his relations at, the school, and ... it's gratifying to see when they actually do improve in those areas, due to things we're doing in the school.

Leonard tells about three students in his class each of whom has a special situation. The first is a boy whose father has recently left home. The second is a boy whose mother is battling for custody. The third is a diabetic boy who requires a strict diet. Leonard says that putting all these factors together, and making the class work, is a source for feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Gender - Child Abuse

Leonard recollects only one case in three years of teaching, in which a parent had expressed concern about child abuse, because of Leonard's presence in class.

> L. There was one parent, at one time, who was concerned that I would pick the children up, or have any kind of physical contact with them at all.
> D. ... what did she say?
> L. I think she just brought it up to the director, ...
> D. So you heard it indirectly?
> L. I heard it through the director.
> But she, she presented it to me in such a way, that she thought it was an unjust accusation, and she didn't think I should change the way I was doing things.
> D. What did the parent say? ... what, was her fear?
> L. I think that she, ... had had some kind of ah, if I recall her little girl was, ... constantly talking about me at home, or something.
> And she would, ... always come and sit in my lap, ... if I was reading a story.
> And I think that maybe she felt, I was somehow

encouraging that or something.

Leonard does not deal with the bathroom. He relegates that job to his assistant teacher. He has never received any remarks about the issue of changing children; he usually avoids the issue of the bathroom altogether.

> ... the way that the bathroom time works at this school, is that, ... the teacher brings the child up to the bathroom, and then they go in themselves, and shut the door.
> ... there are some in diapers, and once in a while, I've had to change diapers, but I guess I kind of steered away from that.
> Just cause I really don't care for it, you know.
> Some of the other teachers have tended to do that.
> Over the three years that I've worked there, I've probably only changed, ... three or four.
> D. ... how, did the other teachers respond to it... ? Did they say anything? Where they resentful, or angry?
> L. I don't think so. I don't know. I guess I just somehow always relegated it to the assistant teacher, or whatever, because ... I mean I've been a head teacher all the time I've been at the school. It's usually been my responsibility to, to take care of the larger group as a whole.
> And to be distracted from, for five or ten minutes by that, is usually too disruptive to the group as a whole.

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

Leonard, who is the only male teacher in school, feels that the differences between him and the female teachers are not because of his gender, but because he is a talented person with a rich background.

> ... one of the things that I do have to offer is that I have a pretty diverse background, ... whereas I feel like a lot of the teachers ... that seem to kind

> through that kind of a program, maybe wouldn't be considered as talented. ... and ..., it does cause me to wonder sometimes, if I'm kind of wasting my time doing it. But I really feel that I'm not ... it's hard for me to speak about this without seeming like ... I have some kind of an attitude about it, but I'm just, ... trying to be as honest as I can.

Leonard mentions several possible reasons for the scarcity of male teachers in the Early Childhood setting. One is the low pay, which is particularly relevant for people like himself, who can do better in other professions. Another reason is that a male teacher may not be viewed as a teacher, but as a babysitter. Leonard speculates that some men cannot stand screaming children, and the "constant intense attention for all the children" that the job requires. There is also the fear of being accused of child abuse, or being viewed as a pedophile. Leonard concludes that the combination of these reasons keeps the males away. He wonders whether the male teachers who stayed in the school for short periods, regarded the job only as a springboard to the more valued teaching of older children.

Leonard thinks that, nowadays, there is a constant move toward more androgynous sex roles; more females assume traditionally male roles, and vice versa. It is a relatively new social change, he says, which requires a slow normative adjustment.

Summary

There are two central streaks in Leonard's work with young children. The first and most important, is his enjoyment of the children's company, and his love of their openness and creativity. The second, is his social awareness and sensitivity to children's experience in the big city.

Leonard uses the children's freshness and optimism as the tools against the ugliness and harshness of their environment. He sees homeless people, drunks and drug addicts, and thinks about the effect that these hard scenes have on a child's soul. Leonard utilizes his keen awareness of his environment, and his high regard for what children are naturally equipped with. In the children's world, says Leonard, snow can turn into cakes and a garden into an enchanted spider's web.

Leonard "bounces back" the children's own resources elaborating colorful activities. By doing so, he improves the quality of their lives in the big city, and maintains his fresh attitude.

Ron

Biography

Ron was born forty one years ago, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was the seventh of nine children. After graduating from High School, Ron went to a technical institute to study computers for a year, and then went, for a while, to Santa Fe, to study Social Work, in college. In 1975, being bilingual, and fluent in both Spanish and English, he worked as a supervisor of admissions for a drug rehabilitation program, in Utah. He worked for a year, and asked to be transferred to a different job, in which he would be involved more directly with people.

Ron was already married and had a three year old son, when he moved to NYC. He said that as a Catholic and Hispanic, he married early. The marriage was already unstable when Ron and his family moved to New York. The couple finally divorced about ten years ago. The son remained with Ron, after a court battle for custody. Ron comments about his wife's reaction to his decision to move to NYC and work with young children.

> I guess she always knew that if I put myself into something, or was put into something, I'll do it, and I'll do a good job. So, ... she had very much confidence in my ability, but, ..., I talk to her every now and then. She'd say "Boy, a lot of good things happened to you ... since we've been divorced ..., and why couldn't I have had all that?" "Cause you didn't stick around long enough. A , I was glad she was gone, because to this day, I didn't know what --- if she stayed. We just didn't have it. We married young

Ron was transferred to NYC to a Parent's Program. The program took care of families, mainly mothers, rarely fathers, with a history of substance abuse or child abuse. Ron was responsible for a group of six to ten children, between the ages of six to twenty four months. He worked with another staff member, and two parents that came on a rotating basis. The parents and children lived separately, within the program's facility.

Ron was on call 24 hours a day, and the work was exhaustive. Burn out among the staff was common. He worked with psychiatrists, physicians, and social workers, and learned a lot.

> .. I was working in the nursery program. My job was to nurture children.
> ... A lot of people would come in who had ah, records of being abused and abusive to their children. Neglectful, cigarette burns, beatings, ah,..
> Who knows what? ... What happens in poor drug infested homes?
> ... and they're not so called, "regular children." They're not. They ARE not. You know, they're regular people that live in this area, but they are not regular children leading regular lives.

Ron was in the Parent's Program for two years and decided to leave. He got a position as an assistant teacher working with two year olds in a Day Care Center, in Manhattan. He was the only man in school, and he was earning less money than he had earned in his previous position.

> ... they were paying some person to clean the place. Something like 250 dollars a month ... and I said, "You know, we've been complaining about the cleaning around here. They never really clean, and we're paying them $250. And they don't pick up, they don't clean ... And sometimes they don't even show." I said, "Why don't let me, give me the 250 dollars." Actually I think it was something like $450. It was, ... almost like you make more doing that than to teach the kids.

Ron worked as an assistant teacher with the twos for two years. He had a group of nine children. Then he moved to the position of a co-teacher, in a mixed age group of three and four year olds. He had twenty one children in his group.

Ron left the Day Care Center after five years of work, and went on to the Day Care in which he now teaches. In the last three years, he has been teaching a group of three year olds. He is also the administrative and maintenance manager of the school.

Ron admits, with a smile, that his friends and family did not understand why he was going into teaching young children, and did not understand what he was teaching. Ron tells about his contribution to children vs. his family's misunderstanding of his work:

> (what)... I have to offer is, is giving kids a break from home, and teaching them how to live with other people. ... giving them confidence about themselves, giving them confidence about their art, confidence in their being able to express themselves in music, to dance, to speak up in a group, and to learn to, to start, or pre-reading stuff, ...
> And yet, people wonder why.. Because in their minds, like my brothers and sisters "Oh, what do you teach them?" You know it's almost like ... You're just babysitting. There just some clay, and then they play. That's it. It's not that. They don't know, cause they don't know. I never was in a pre-school, ... And none of my family were in a pre-school.

Ron says that when he moved to NYC he did not know that teaching young children would be his call. He works long hours, loves his work, and is very proud of what he is doing.

> You came out of High School, ... and I went right on..

> to Computer Schools, and I went to College in Santa Fe, into Social Work area. So then I knew what was Social Work, then I started to work in the Program. Then I was interviewed, but it's all, i... in the people thing. All of the Social Work I did in Utah, all the admissions thing to me was.... I didn't like it. It's not my thing.
> ... I like sitting down, and loving children ... It doesn't hurt when you sit down and children love you too.

Ron had dated a teacher in his previous school, and now he lives with the director of the Day Care Center in which he works. Ron's outside interests are drawing, woodworking, antiques, coin collecting, and bottle collecting.

Ron, who started working with substance abusers, got to work with young children through the "back door". The difficult scenes he witnessed, left an acute awareness of the neglect of children. Ron concluded that whatever happened to the family, the goal of the social agents (social workers, educators, etc.) should be to keep the children with their parents, as much as possible.

The family, as the nucleus unit, says Ron, should be the focus of society's interest. Ron senses the changes that have occurred within the family. These changes include not only the changing role of the male as the family's head, and the shift toward equality between males and females, but also the introduction of the single parent, and the different varieties of the extended family.

Ron the sole informant who gives an example of male teachers only, working as a team in the classroom. He presents the issue of parents' fear of the homosexual male teacher in class, and the way the staff can confront the parents' concerns.

Ron's awareness of the social issues, brings in a wealth of subjects which were not mentioned before. In this sense, Ron gives us an outlook on **the** current social changes that society is undergoing. He emphasizes that the role of Early Childhood Education is becoming increasingly crucial, as a mean of coping with society's changing face.

Relationships with Teachers

Ron expresses deep appreciation for the women he has worked with. If he has any criticism, it is based on a professional ground. He said, that through the years, he felt acceptance from women, and that they taught him a lot. Ron describes the relationships in his first Day Care Center.

> ... there was a lot of, ... women that taught me a lot of good things at that school. If I had any problems, ... with any of the females, that was all from work, because, no one got into anything personal ... And it's amazing that ... the problems that I did have with particular women, because I thought, they were overbearing to me, and condescending to me, ... But it turns out, that ... I wasn't the only one feeling it. And that, that person ended up gone anyway. I don't know if it was a male-female thing. Might have been. Who knows? But in either case, it's those teachers who I had problems with, that eventually left the program. Quit, or weren't hired back, ...

Ron said that he had great respect for the director of the first Day Care Center in which he worked. He felt proud to be part of a team that shaped the school. But, he became bitter, when the director overlooked capable people within the staff (including his girlfriend, at that time), when she was looking for a successor. Ron was hurt and left the Day Care Center.

Ron admits that, personally, he prefers to work with people who are warm, even when professionally he can appreciate cold people whom he has worked with.

> ... sometimes people aren't all cold. And, when it comes to the job they become cold, 'cause they operate in two worlds. At home, they might be warm, but at work, that's business, and they don't want to get too close. 'Cause one day, they might have to fire you, or tell you what to do on your job, or why are you late?

Relationships with Children

Ron's first experience in working with children was at the Parent's Program. Over there, he worked with mainstream children and children with special needs. Since he has worked with 0-24 month old children, and gained a lot of experience, he could compare the development of different children.

> ... I learned what children can do at particular ages; what you can expect them at particular stages, what is normal, what is abnormal, when you're working with kids who are normal and abnormal, because they've been drugged, being born to a parent, ...
> And the parent addicted to drugs.
> ... there is a lot them are slow. So you get to see that. And then knowing that, and comparing that to so called regular kids,...
> ... some just lagged for a while. A lot of them were fine. A lot of them weren't. A lot of them had so much emotional problems, because they weren't getting much love from Mom, when Mom is depressed, ... Mom's

> entirely bugged out. Dad is, you know... So, they got their love from us, and they got their love from the program, ...

Ron thinks that it is mainly the teacher's personality that influences the children's relationship with the teachers, female or male. At the beginning, the children (especially the girls), do not get close to him, because they are more used to having female teachers in class. But gradually, the children approach him and become close.

> ... children always pick one teacher over another, for whatever reasons, and they go do it even in times of need, or wants and whatever, or trouble,... or even for a little love,... whatever ....
> They'd come around. And ... that's part of the, ... proof that you're being, ... half successful as far as getting their trust. They don't really come to you if they don't trust, if they don't like you. ... you can be a LOUSY teacher, but they might trust you, so they'll still come to you. So like I say, it's only half of it. ... of an indication that you're doing your job.

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

Ron said that in his own Hispanic background, a man is supposed to be a Macho, and nobody blames him, when married, if he fools around. Ron does not agree with the Macho model. He does not look at women as inferior or superior, but as equals. This is the way he behaves in his personal and professional lives. Ron expresses deep love and appreciation when he talks about Jeraldine, the director, with whom he lives and works.

> ... the director of this program, I now live with. And she obviously makes more money than I do. Doesn't affect me, ... I mean so much that "Ah, how can I stand seeing a woman that makes more than I do". It never was like that. For one reason, she is not that kind of a person.
> And she is not demanding like that, ... and she knows that I live my life, as far as liking... I like to do what I do.
> And this is what I do best, and ... this is what she's been doing, teaching this stuff, until finally she got this place. And she became the director.
> ... this is her thing. She wants it to work. She wants it to work every day, and every week, and every month and every year.
> She wants it work. So, she's not going to alienate and isolate the people.
> ... she has no bones about, you know, sharing confidences with them, which brings in friendships.
> ... she just has a magnetic personality.

Ron believes in the sharing of burdens at home. He understands men who stay at home and raise their children. He accepts the idea of a couple taking turns in carrying the financial burdens at home, when one of them has to devote herself/himself to her/his studies.

Ron thinks that it is not that males are less sensitive than females, but that males are brought up in society to behave in an insensitive way. The point with men, says Ron, is that only a few of them show their sensitivity.

> ... A lot of fathers generally don't do that. A lot of them can be sensitive, but they don't know, ... how to do it as well. I've had experience. I've been working at this for so long, and I have been role models to some of the parents who have their kid in their hands, who's two years or three, ...
> I've seen these kids over and over and over. I can deal with situations that will come up with them. It might turn into a situation, where, a volatile situation. I can turn it around and make it a positive

> experience.
> 'Cause I'm listening to the child, whereas the father in this case, as a male, ... may blow up and be impatient or something.

Ron thinks that for him, as a male, it is easier to communicate with male co-workers than with female co-workers, because of non-formal friendly meetings after work. The availability of social interaction accounts for better communication. Ron admits that it is important (for him) because, he has much more patience with children than he has with adults.

Ron tells that, one year, they had four male teachers in school. It created a new situation and brought up unprecedented questions from the parents.

> R. ... there was a point, where, ..., there was three of us, possibly four men, in this place working. There was one in the two's, one in the three's, and two in the four's there one year. I remember, a head teacher, and an assistant. And people were wondering like "I wonder if I want to put my kid in there with two men, in the four's class", you know. And. One was gay, you know, one was gay.
> And the other wasn't, as far as I know. So, I guess these were issues that people think about. "Put my kid in there with two men... And these are the role models. ... they're going to be nurturing my kid through this, through the magic years, ..."
> "And ah, let's see. One is not that experienced, and he's a man, and the other is gay.
> D. The parents knew?
> R. Yeah! You would know. Very effeminate. Good worker. Did what he had to do, doesn't matter what sexual preference. It's not part of the school. It's part of my thinking, ... even men who like women have different sexual practices much less, preferences.
> R. So, "Hey who's down there to judge all that? No one is going to judge me, because it's nobody's business". But still, that'll would come up, sure it would come up.
> ... because it hits your mind.

So they talk about it, and, you reassure them, it's fine you know.

D. What did you say?

R. Well it wasn't exactly that. There were a few people who came out and said "I'm not sure, you know.. " They were prejudiced, they were biased, they had their own, like "Hey, women are usually in the class, with this age group, ... and, there were questions ... The parents were honest enough to say, "You know, I know it sounds silly, but..." And what they were asking for was reassurance.
They knew, what they were feeling, was a feeling, but they needed to talk about it, cause they wanted to get it off their mind and get back on the track, ... And it turned out it was fine.
It turned out it was fine. As long as the people were here all the time, and, it didn't matter what sex they were.

Ron describes the population of teachers who came and went. He says that the school had good experience with male teachers, but like most of the other teachers, they saw their work as a temporary occupation.

> ... a lot of people who come through here, male and female, come through here as assistants, and are, good for the school, but, they're dancers, they're singers, they're artists, you know musicians...
> ... and people who need a job, because of their career is on hold, or is not making them the money they want to make.
> ... and, what happens, you know, they come and go.

Ron sees three main reasons for the scarcity of male teachers in Early Childhood Education. The first is society's slow acceptance of men in a new role. The second is the novelty of the field. The third, which Ron thinks is the most important, is the low pay.

Ron thinks that men were lucky, because women accepted them into the field. But, it is society's attitude as a whole, that should ensure that men are not discouraged from going into the profession. The low pay and the poor image make it un-attractive for young people.

> ... how many men, when they're like in the eighth grade, in the ninth grade, say, want to grow up to be a pre-school teacher.
> I never heard anybody say that, in the tenth grade. And you can't blame... Make some kind of money. Go to college and be, something. And you rarely, even have here kids saying that. You ask a little kid "What are you going to do when you grow up?" They don't say to you, ... "I want to be a Teacher"... They'll say Policeman, Police Officer, or Mail Carrier, or they want to be a Pilot,

Ron admits that he continues to work in a low paid profession because he loves what he is doing. Yet, he does not conceal the difficulties, especially as a single parent.

> My son was lucky enough, that we were here in New York, and every pre-school I worked with, he was there. And it was fine. In fact, where I worked it was free. I really like that. I could not afford my kid to come to this school.
> I couldn't afford my kid to go to the last school I was at either.
> I had to find a way to make sure I make ENOUGH money. Still not enough like some people want. Some people want $30,000 off the top, and let's go from there. Next year 35, next year 40, you know. In business.

Ron thinks that Day Care is not appreciated, which it should be, because of its social importance. He remarks that the social changes which encourage more women to work, imply that Day Care has a key role in enabling the family, to function albeit its contradictory interests.

Ron indicates that, in a world where the family structure is changing, Day Care is a social institution which helps families cope with the pressures of raising children. Ron touches upon two social changes simultaneously. The first is the increasing number of women in the labor force, and the second is the changing frame of the family. Both changes require an adjustment on society's part. Educators in Early Childhood Education can play a central role in this adjustment.

> ... it is such an important job, that it has to be done, especially in this day and age, where people are not staying home.
> Kids are not staying home, parents are not staying home. They are both working.
> And especially in a big city like this, what are you going to do: let your kid go out and play?
> So, it's important what we do. And I feel we should be paid a lot more. A lot more. Anybody who just came in, male or female, luckily they may have a husband somewhere who's making money,
> You know, a lot of people have come in like that. Their husband makes some big bucks, so that they could afford to work here as as extra, a little added to their income.
> But not for me, it's not that situation, you know.
> I don't ah, ..., I don't share in... The money, that, that my woman makes in this case, the director, that's her money. She has a son, she takes care of her bills, and her things. We share rents. We share stuff like that, but it's not like we both have an estate, for someday, her and I... That's not the case. Her money is her money. My money is mine.
> I have my own son. Now we have two families, OK?
> Then we have more, because then their, her, my ex-wife, is married with a kid or two, and her ex-husband, also may have a kid someday, and ah, another girlfriend, or wife someday, so, you're talking about an extended family of sorts.

Ron hints that social attitudes toward the role of the male are slowly changing, and tells about the court battle in which he won the custody of his son.

> ... I won sole custody. I wondered who would win. I wondered. 'Cause I have experience, with kids. I do! You know, I do! ... I knew I had TONS more experience with children, in understanding of, dealing with children. Of course, courts usually give it to the mother, but hopefully things will change and they would give it to the parent who would benefit the child more..

Summary

Ron, forty one years old, and a father to a son, is the informant most at peace with himself. Ron has managed to incorporate his profession and personal life into a frame that makes him happy, one which does not leave him bitter about any aspect of his life.

Ron, who has worked for fourteen years with young children, brings a broad scope of social knowledge to the job. Out of this extensive knowledge, Ron discerns the increasing role of Early Childhood Education. In a complex and changing society, says Ron, male and female educators of young children, fulfill an urgent need. It is the educators' duty to help working parents with the burden of child rearing; and, it is society's obligation to acknowledge the importance of the educators, and to maintain, in an honorable way, the system of Early Childhood Education.

IV. B. ANALYSIS

The Comparative Analysis

The Comparative Analysis deals with the mutual and idiosyncratic themes of the male teachers, but mainly focuses on the themes that are peculiar to male teachers as opposed to female teachers. Ayers and Bredekamp give the main outlines of the Early Childhood teacher, and the constant comparison to their models, enabled me to pick up the specific issues of the male teachers.

Having read Ayers, I found many of the female teachers' descriptions parallel to those of males. Therefore, portraying the characteristics of the male teachers, became a process of elimination.

Biography and Personality

I. The Personal Perspectives

Analysis of the personal perspectives of the informants' stories, reveal some common streaks that connect them all. All five are highly individualistic. They are highly motivated, and have sacrificed a great deal, financially or emotionally, in order to work with young children.

There is a high social awareness in each of the teachers. They are sensitive to society's malaise of social injustice, and moral corruption, and are willing to endeavor and make themselves the actual agents of social change. In this respect, their needs to nurture, to teach, and to love, are the forces and the tools with which they do their work.

The teachers come from working and middle class families. They are non-materialistic persons, who work hard for their living and do not regard materialistic objects as their top priority. Most of them have other professions, in which they could earn more money, but they prefer to teach, in a low paid profession, rather than do less enjoyable work.

None of the informants have, a so called, a "traditional" family, in which there is a married couple and children. Daniel J. Levinson, in The Seasons of a Man's Life (p.29), described the "traditional" model of a man getting married and having children in his 20's, and then having an "empty nest" in his 40's. But, the model that Levinson portrays is questionable nowadays. It does not include single parent (male or female) families. It does not include homosexual parents (male or female) with children. It does not include the "extended" family of divorced parents, each bringing in his children from previous marriages. Levinson's model does not fit the lives of the teachers I have met. None has a "traditional" family. Jeff, 50, is divorced and has four children. Ron, 41, is divorced, has one child, and lives with his girlfriend in an "extended" family. Jack, 35, is married with no children. Leonard, 30, and Charles, 22, are both single.

One dominant fact, money, must be taken into account when we compare Levinson's model to the five informants. The lack of adequate salaries in the profession probably reduces any chance for a man who wants a "traditional" family, to choose the profession as a career. The low salaries cause two probable results: moving out of the "traditional" frame of family, or moving out of the profession to more lucrative options. The non "traditional" families of the informants constitute a noticeable feature, which requires a broader investigation, to determine if it is characteristic or accidental.

The close analysis of the teachers' support systems reveals that there is no consistency, and that the common factor is a high personal motivation to teach. Jack, Charles, and Leonard told of support they received from families and friends. Ron reported about support from his wife and girlfriend, but not from his own family. Jeff reported lack of support from both family and friends.

II Professional Perspectives

All teachers, except one (Charles), deliberately chose to teach. Charles had stumbled into it, and loved it. Except Charles, all teachers have other professions. Nevertheless, they deliberately accepted the decrease in their income, and chose a low paying, low status profession. High motivation and commitment are reflected in two ways: age of the informants, and the years each has spent in the field. The teachers' mean age is 35.6, and they have been on average, 7.9 years in the field of Early

Childhood Education.

The older teachers (Jeff, Ron, and Jack) clearly conveyed that Early Childhood Education was their career of choice, and that it perfectly suited their personalities and world views. Leonard regarded teaching as complementing his major profession as a musician. Charles loved teaching, but was too young to have a perspective on teaching as his future career. Still, he expresses his wish to develop within the field, and to study Early Childhood Education in college, so as to have more knowledge.

There was a clear sense that teaching in Early Childhood was a statement the teachers wanted to make. They regarded their work as a positive counterbalance to social problems such as social neglect, substance abuse, moral corruption, and child abuse.

Jack thought that all children, from all social classes and races, should get the best opportunities possible. He felt estranged from the affluent families of the children he taught, not only because of his low salary, but also because he felt that he should be working with poor children where his presence would make a greater difference. Leonard felt the same way. He claimed that children are neglected in our society, and therefore, his work would make their life in the big city, a positive experience. Leonard pointed to the negative impact of young children, being exposed to scenes of homelessness and substance abuse.

Jeff came into the field after he worked with high school students, and was appalled by the dimensions of substance abuse and corrupt social attitudes. Jeff found that the only way to make a difference is by working with children of very young age. He was deeply influenced by Piaget's and Montessori's ideas of enriching young children's minds by enriching their worlds.

Ron had witnessed the harsh world of families with substance abuse history. He worked with the parents and nurtured their children, some of them born addicted. Not only the children, said Ron, should be the focus of our attention, but keeping the family's integrity, should be a concern as well. Ron felt that his work, as a social worker and an educator, had helped families to cope with their problems. By working with young children, he not only nurtured them, but also served a role model for their mothers and fathers. Ron, who believes in the equality of men and women, has shown fathers that they too, could be sensitive and nurturant to their children.

Charles experienced the meaning of growing up with no male figure at home. In his teaching, he tries to be a male role model for the children, because he believes, that even children who have fathers, rarely have an opportunity to interact with an adult male. His presence, says Charles, gives children an important social experience, which otherwise, they would have missed.

The teachers found in teaching a place they could bring, not only their sensitivity and warmth, but their life experience as well. Jeff brought in his knowledge of science and mechanics. Ron brought in his life experience as a social worker. Jack brought in his knowledge of cooking and love for the language. Leonard brought in his knowledge of music. Charles brought in his memories of a happy childhood on one hand, and those of growing up without a father, on the other.

All teachers cited satisfaction from work as the most powerful reason for staying in the field. They enjoyed the children's feedback, and regarded it as the most reassuring, and joyous part of their work.

Teachers

All five teachers said they were accepted by the female teachers. The male teachers reported overall good responses from female teachers. If there were clashes between male and female teachers, they were, generally speaking, on a professional level. Another type of friction was caused by clashes of personalities. Leonard and Jeff talked about tensions which originated in professional jealousy. Only Jeff reported any jealousy stemming from gender. Jeff said that another teacher was furious that he, and not a female teacher, was mentioned in an article about summer programs in NYC. Jeff described the teacher as a "screaming feminist" and thought her criticism unprofessional.

The informants made it quite clear that they avoided sexual relations with the female teachers, for the sake of keeping professional and personal boundaries clear.

Ron's story is somewhat in the middle. He admitted he was influenced to leave the first Day Care Center he worked at, when his girlfriend, also a teacher there, was overlooked as a potential successor. Ron also stressed that he did not mind working under his present director, although he lives with her. He made clear his effort to separate the romantic and professional relationships.

The teachers emphasized that what counted in the work with children was not the teacher's gender, but her/his personality. Jack summarized this point very concisely, when he said that it is human work, and not woman's (or man's) work. The qualities that count, in this work with children, are being sensitive, warm, and nurturing.

The male teachers were appreciative of the women they worked with. They were thankful for being accepted into a field dominated by women, and said that they had learned a lot from them. Working with women broadened the males' scope, and gave them an opportunity to look at women not only as sexual objects. As Jeff put it, he had the opportunity to work with both men and women, and he preferred women. And besides, said Jeff, he was prejudiced; he had three daughters.

The male teachers were proud of the good team work they had with the female teachers. They regarded it as a professional achievement, and as a source of joy and pride. Jeff, Ron, and Jack, who stayed long years in one school, were proud of the teams they were part of. Less strong ties were described where turn-over was high. Still, Charles reported that he had felt pride when he had been a part of a good team for a year. Jeff reported that his team has been working together for nine years, and described the mutual support and fluid relegation of work. The teachers regarded good team work as one of the reasons for the success of the school. They took pride in their schools, and their own contribution to the schools' successes.

Children

All teachers reported a period of adjustment to working with very young children. The teachers said, that at the beginning, they felt scared, nervous, and tense. It took them some time to study the children, to understand the nature of the work, and to adjust themselves to the school.

The teachers' stories express three major elements. The first is a wish to make a change both personally and in society. The second is the enthusiasm for working with young children. And, the third, is professional satisfaction. Since the last element was mentioned before, only the first two will be discussed.

There are two important elements behind the idea of causing social change. The first element, that of causing society to change, was mentioned before, and is part of the high social awareness of the teachers. The second element is a desire to change children's stereotypes about men. The teachers expressed their hope, that their presence in class, would give the children a real knowledge about male adults, and would break the stereotypes that had been transmitted by the media and toys. The teachers wanted to show the children that males could be physical, but careful; that they could be gentle and not rough; that they could be warm rather than frightening; that they could be playful rather than rigid; that they could be real and close, rather than cardboard cutouts.

These male teachers convey a deep appreciation of their students. As Jeff put it, he saw his own children in every one of his students. Ron and Jack, who had worked with children with special needs, conveyed the same respect for these children as they did for mainstream students. Ron rejected the term "irregular" children. For him, a child was a child, no matter if he came from parents who were substance abusers or affluent. Jack could not stand the neglect of Adam, a child with special needs, who was in his class, and tried to help him to the best of his ability.

The teachers had different age group preferences. Some love the toddlers, some the two's, and some the three's and above. A noticeable phenomenon is that none of the teachers currently work with infants and toddlers up to 24 months old. The tendency is to drift toward older age groups rather than continuing to work with infants and toddlers. These male teachers wish to avoid the care per se, i.e. feeding, toileting, etc., and want instead to concentrate on cognitive and physical activities. They tended to avoid the bathroom area and the children's toileting because of the possibility of child abuse accusations (1).

The teachers are more ready to deal with older children who are able to take care of their bodies, and are more mature. The teachers are interested in the two's and above, because all the children are more capable socially, and have developed enough language, so that they can start to communicate their thoughts. Jack said that he loved working with toddlers, but he added that it was the older toddlers (20-24 month olds and above) that could best fit the program where he worked. The young ones, said Jack, needed too much individual care, which hindered work with the rest of the group.

Jeff clearly stated his preference for the older children, when he said that he resented the term "Nursery School". Jeff thought the term did not describe his work, and was irritated by it. He did not like to think of himself changing diapers. He did not want to give bottles. He wanted to teach. There was a fine line here, quite discernable, which the male teachers did not want to cross. They did not want to be associated with babysitters, mothers, or whatever seemed to be too contradictory to traditional male sex roles. When tensions grew too high, and the male teachers felt themselves moving too deep into the female domain, they gravitated toward "safer" areas, namely teaching older children (24 months old and above).

---

1. Discussed in detail under the Gender-Child Abuse heading.

Most teachers said that they loved physical activity with children, but had learned to be cautious for the sake of safety and control. As Charles and Leonard noticed, the children got very excited when they were involved in physical activity with the teachers, and then tended to get too rough and out of control. The teachers continued to initiate physical activities, but with more awareness of safety and control.

The teachers reported that girls were, especially at the beginning, more shy with them. Charles felt that some of the girls were afraid and hesitant to approach him. But all teachers reported, that after a period of mutual acquaintance, the children warmed up and expressed love and affection. Charles thought that children were not used to adult males, outside of the home and family environment, not to mention children who had no male figures at all at home, like Gary, who became very attached to Jack.

The teachers regarded their role with the children as a double one. The first was being an adult role mode, and the second was being a male role model.

The teachers' reports conveyed the children's different needs for the male figure in class. According to these reports, boys and girls, each for their own reasons, were attached to the male teacher. Jack told about Gary, who had no male figures at home. Charles told about Larry, who repeated Charles's story about the three elephants in the park. Charles also told about Nancy, a girl who had been very shy of him, but who eventually got close to him and told him "Charles, I love you." The children needed the male figure just as they needed the female figure - according to their own individual personalities. As Charles and Ron put it, the children made their own choices, and made their own special attachments.

Charles stressed the point that children should see the differences between a male and a female figure. The male figure should be a natural part of the children's experiences in school. Just as the children experience their own social world (with peers, younger, and older children); just as they experience a new relationship with a female teacher who is a new adult figure outside the context of their family, they should experience a new relationship with a male teacher. The teachers were all aware of the lack of male figures in school, and they deliberately wanted to fulfill that role, so the children would have a male role model to follow.

Charles pointed out explicitly, that children should have males, as well as females, in their lives, in order to help them develop their sex-role identity. Charles put it this way; there are things which are not done solely by women or men, and the foundation of sex role identity is one of them (1).

Charles felt that some of the children were shy and scared of

---

1. Charles gave an example of children who were playing in Role Play who asked him to Play Daddy and Boy.

him in the bathroom, and he attributed it not only to his gender, but also to the children's desire for privacy. Charles talked of the emotional difficulty he had when cleaning the children's sexual organs, when they were no longer infants. He described infants and twos as two different worlds, and admitted he had a hard time when he had to clean up a boy who needed to be changed frequently. Charles said the female teachers had the same feelings when they had to change children.

Charles' description was part of the male teachers' aversion to dealing with the bathroom (1). Besides the fears of child accusations of child abuse, the male teachers expressed other reasons for not dealing with the changing of children. Jeff thought a child not out of diapers at the age of two and a half years, was not emotionally ready for the program. Therefore, he thought the child should be toilet trained when she/he came to the program. Leonard regarded changing diapers as the work of the assistant teacher. He thought that, as a head teacher, being occupied with changing children would interrupt the activity of the whole group. Charles probably pointed at the most prevailing reason from the children's point of view; they were not used to a male figure in the bathroom, and therefore, felt more comfortable with the female teachers.

The teachers were united in their opinion, that for the children, the difference in the activities was in the way that

---

1. It is discussed in detail under the Gender-Child Abuse heading.

the male did them vs. the way female teachers did them. The activities, said Charles, were done differently by the male teachers as far as the child was concerned. Jeff emphasized the point that every teacher brought in her/his special contribution. Jeff taught science, and another teacher taught art; but, it is not that a female teacher did not, or could not teach science, just as it was not that he did not or could not teach cooking. It was the interaction with the children that was different, and not the activities themselves. Charles gave the example of the physical activities he did with the children. From his example, it was clear that the children were rougher while doing the activity with him, because the interaction was different than when done with a female teacher. Charles admitted that he became more aware and more controlled in his physical activities, but it was not clear whether he became so because he got negative responses from the female teachers, or did not want the children to get out of control, or both.

Charles felt that the differences in relationships with children concerned not only the activities, but also the nature of the interaction itself. Girls and boys, had very different interactions with him, than they had with female teachers. The presence of the male teacher, said Charles, was another outlet for children; they used it as their curiosity spurred them continuously, in their exploration of the world.

Parents

Ron felt that he was a role model for the fathers, showing them how to be sensitive, and how to listen to their child. Jeff told about himself being a role model for parents in matters of discipline.

Jack and Ron felt that they were of a lower social status than most parents. Both mentioned this in regard to their own children. Jack said he felt frustrated with taking care of affluent children, while he could not afford to have his own. Ron said, that as a parent, he could not afford to send his own son to the Day Care Center he was working in.

Jeff's position was unique in respect to his relationships with the parents. Being fifty years old, a father of four children, and financially settled, he could look parents in the eye, with no qualms. Jeff treated parents as social equals. He was exceptional in this sense of equality, because financially he was secure enough not to feel inferior to the parents. It made his position the way it should be, for all teachers, male or female: socially equal to the parents, and socially proud of what they are doing. As will be detailed in the Gender section, this is not the case today, especially not with male teachers.

The teachers reported that parents were happy to have them as male figures in class, and expressed their appreciation for their special contribution. As Leonard put it, parents were thankful that their child would have the opportunity to develop a relationship with a male figure.

Yet, parents conveyed mixed attitudes toward male teachers. Along with their proclaimed appreciation of the contribution made by males, there were messages of fear over child abuse; there were fears about the presence of two male teachers in the same class; and there were fears about homosexuals as role models. Jack and Ron, who confronted these parental fears, dealt with them with openness and self confidence. But Jack's remark that he did not think that the parents ever had full confidence in him, or Leonard's story about a mother's fears which were conveyed to him indirectly, showed that the suspicions were deep, and that teachers were working with a constant awareness of parents' deeper fears and mistrust.

Gender - Child Abuse

Being accused of child abuse was, by and large, the male teachers' deepest fear. The most obvious sign was that they tried, to the best of their ability, to avoid dealing with the bathroom, or getting into a situation where they would be alone there with a child.

The teachers mentioned four possible sensitive areas with regard to child abuse accusations: the bathroom, conversations about gender, physical contact, and race.

Jack avoided the bathroom or made a point of not being alone there with a child. Charles had emotional, and sometimes physical difficulties while in the bathroom. Jeff sent the younger children with their older peers. Leonard sent his assistant, in order not to interrupt the group activity. Each teacher found sound reasons for not dealing with the bathroom, in order to minimize the possible accusations, by co-workers or parents, of child abuse.

Charles pointed out that he even avoided talking with the children about gender. The children were curious about their organs and the differences between boys and girls. Charles tried to shorten the discussions about gender as much as possible, so that he would not be heard talking about issues of gender.

Jack, Jeff, and Leonard, reported that they were even aware of physical contact with the children during play. Jack tried to avoid having children sitting in his lap, and Leonard heard, through his director, about a parent who was concerned about her daughter sitting on his lap.

Jack raised the issue of racial tensions. Black parents he had worked with, had openly confronted him with their fear of him as a white male teacher, getting mad at their children, and physically, or sexually, abusing them.

Jeff, Ron, Leonard, and Charles, raised the possible dangers a child faces in the street. The street was not mentioned as an area of danger for the teachers, since the programs which were mentioned, did not include being alone in the street with a child (which is done in some schools, when a teacher goes for a walk with one or two children). But the street as a dangerous place, physically, and sexually, was mentioned, and the parents' and teachers' fears about it, crept into the class and were reflected in the teachers' reports.

The teachers mentioned the very serious impact that child abuse cases, which had received excessive media coverage a few years ago, had on them. From conversations with the teachers and other educators, it was clear that these cases had caused tremendous harm to the male teachers' image. It had cast the shadow of potential accuasation of child abuse, on every male in the field, and increased the parents' and female teachers' fears of male teachers. As Jeff put it, he felt furious at the child abusers, because they were ruining his work as a male teacher. Jeff pointed to the sensitive issue of the male teachers' feelings when they had to confront spoken and unspoken suspicions of child abuse. As Jack said, he almost "flipped out". Leonard gave a detailed account of the indirect suspicion a parent had expressed about him. As an interviewer, it was difficult not to sense the hurt feelings of the teachers. The analysis of the interviews brings it into the open; the possibility of being accused of child abuse constantly hovers over the teachers' head, and never lets go.

Jeff speculated that the ultra sensitivity to the child abuse issue, is a result of the guilt feelings which prevade Christianity with regard to sexuality. As a researcher who comes from a different culture, I do not want to plunge into this deep discussion, but want to remark that in the culture from which I come, there is a great deal less hyper sensitivity to the issue of child abuse. The issue of sensitivity to child abuse in different cultures is fascinating, but it will not be elaborated in the present work.

The Male Teacher and Gender Issues

I. Society's Perspectives

Jack used the term "women's work" to explain the low image of the profession. As Jack put it, teaching in Early Childhood is a denigrated profession, because it is identified as a traditionally feminine profession, and therefore, of low status and pay.

These teachers portrayed what they think is the image of a male teacher in Early Childhood Education. According to this image, a male teacher can fit into one or more of the following descriptions: a homosexual, a pedophile, a child abuser, or a failure.

A male teacher contradicts the male sex-role model of a breadwinner. A man who deliberately goes into a profession which pays so poorly, must be a failure as a man. He cannot earn enough money to support his family, and probably has failed in everything else he has done before. The femininity associated with the profession, casts immediate suspicion on male teachers. As Ron and Jack put it, men are not supposed to show their sensitivity, or to show that they can be warm and nurturant. These qualities belong to women, so only feminine males, go into a feminine profession. The sexual perversity does not stop here, because if a man is not working in a gender appropriate job, something is probably very wrong with his sexual preferences. So not only is he suspected as a homosexual, but also as a pedophile, who craves the little bodies of boys and girls, or a sadistic child abuser waiting to fulfill his darkest, unheard of dreams.

Ron talked of an unusual setting in which two male teachers worked in the same class. It is interesting, that this unusual occurance was much more questionable by parents, espeically when the presence of two female teachers is commonplace in class. Clearly, the prevailing notion of the field as female dominated, is so strong, that the opposite in class (only male teachers), is immediately questionable. Ron sharpened the point, when he related that one of the teachers was homosexual. Ron's example brings up two new issues; society's attitude towards a homosexual male teacher; and society's attitude towards a homosexual female teacher. Basically, the question remains the same; how does society regard the male teacher, heterosexual or homosexual, differently than it regards his female counterpart?

Without entering the sub-subject of male or female homosexuality, my view is that in both cases, when there are teachers of the same gender in class, we are doing wrong as far as the children are concerned. There should be a male and a female figure in the class, so the children will have both the influences of femininity and masculinity.

II The Male Teachers' Perspectives

The male teachers regarded themselves as equal, not superior or inferior, to women. Jack and Jeff mentioned that they had seen themselves as the male answer to the feminist movement. All teachers expressed their respect and appreciation of the women they worked with.

Ron, who came from what he called a Macho Culture, and Jeff, who came from a background in which a man's major sex-role was to have a family and to be its breadwinner, presented the sharpest shift the teachers had gone through, from what they had been brought up to, to what they had become. Jack was somewhere in the middle. In his family, the men went hunting, but his father took care of his sons, and was a role model for Jack. Charles, who had no father at home, and Leonard, who grew up in an artists' home, made shorter leaps, than Jeff and Ron did, in order to perform a non-traditional male sex-role. All five emphasized, that their work is not intrinsically gender related, and Jack summarized it for all, when he said that "it's not women's work, it's human work."

Leonard suggested that the work male teachers are doing is part of the social trend toward an androgynous model of sex roles. Leonard saw the same shift in women who became technicians, police officers, armed forces officers, astronauts, lawyers, accountants, CEO's, etc. All are professions that were regarded off limits to women not so long ago. Leonard remarked that society is more permissive, with regard to women who go into what was once defined as masculine professions, than it is to men who go into feminine professions.

The teachers did not regard their work as feminine work. Ron was straight forward: teaching is teaching, no matter if one teaches college, or in a Day Care Center. Jeff resented the term Nursery School. He suggested that the term arose from immediate feminine association that went with the word "nursing", and which contradicted what he was doing in school. Jeff's resentment pinpointed the gender issue: is it only a woman who can take care of a child because of her gender? Or, can a man do as well? Jeff hit the gender issue right on the head in admitting that the term Nursery School still bothered him, even though he regarded himself as a teacher, and saw his class as a working classroom.

Charles admitted that sometimes he felt embarrassed saying that he was a teacher in Early Childhood. As Jeff and Charles explained, the transition into a female dominated profession was not simple at all. Jack said, with a smile, that he wanted to put the feminist movement on its head, but Jeff's remark (about "Nursery School") shows that it was probably a heavy load.

Jeff thought that male teachers had an advantage over female teachers in the matter of discipline. He suggested that the mother's attachment to her child made it hard for her to be a disciplinarian . The child associated the female teacher with his/her mother, and therefore, made it hard for the teacher to control her/him. The theory is interesting and is worth further investigation, but at the same time, it evokes a lot of unresolved issues that will not be discussed in the analysis.

Charles told about a male teacher who had been in his school, and was a role model for him. His story points to the loneliness of the male teacher. Unlike the female teacher, the male teacher have few role-models to show him how to deal with his special situation, as the sole male in the school, and to teach him how to avoid pitfalls.

The professional loneliness is, sometimes, accompanied, with social solitude. Jack felt that he could not get into the female teachers' gossip, since they were closed within themselves. Ron felt that he had better communication with male teachers, because he could go out and have a drink and talk about work. He could not be so free with the female teachers, and felt that because he was a male, he had to be careful when he was talking to a female teacher, lest he be perceived as too harsh.

The teachers mentioned several reasons for the scarcity of male teachers in Early Childhood. Almost all put low pay as the first and most serious reason. Other reasons, were the low social status, the unpleasant image, the novelty of the field for men, and the doubtful acceptance by society of a new sex role. Leonard speculated that maybe men were not comfortable with screaming children, and did not have the patience to teach them.

Ron elaborated on the money issue, and said that Day Care should be valued and supported. Ron commented, that in a society where both parents are working, it is imperative that the Early Childhood Education system should be valued socially and financially. It is after all, the educators who allow the parents to work and take care of their children at the same time. Not only do Early Childhood professionals make it possible for the parents to work, they also deal with children in their most formative years, which influence, most heavily, their later behavior in society. Ron pointed to the mutual responsibility between the educators and society, and emphasized that a good, well supported education system, means gentler, happier people, in the future.

Jeff and Ron hinted about the changes that society has gone through during the last two decades, with regard to the male sex role, and the care of young children. As Jeff noted, it was unthinkable, twenty years ago, that a divorced man would have the custody of his children. But, just ten years ago, Ron won custody of his son, and said that it happened, because he was more knowledgeable and experienced caregiver than his wife.

Discussion

A word of caution is essential before beginning the discussion. One must be constantly aware of the different methods used by the different researchers, before any comparison is made. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind, that the present research was ethnographic in its nature and included only five informants. The research did not include any in-class observations of the informants, and all information is taken solely from the male teachers themselves. Last, but not least, the research does not pretend to portray the typical male teacher. It only tries, to the best of its ability, to find the characteristics that unite the five informants.

The discussion will follow the path of the Review of the Literature. It will be divided, therefore, into two main subjects: Sex Role and Social Attitude, and Behavior in Class and Personality.

Sex Role and Social Attitude

The present research agrees with Seifert about society's attitude toward male teachers. The informants exhibited, that beneath the expressed acceptance in the field, lie deep suspicion, mistrust, and a repulsive image. Teti & Lamb (pp.22-23) pointed at the teachers' most poignant issue: their work contradicts "the most important measure of masculinity in American society", which means that their work does not make them respectable breadwinners. The teachers' choice of work, which contradicts the traditional sex role, brings clear and painful sanctions: the first major sanction is financial, and the second is social. One has to see and listen to Jack, a ten year veteran, in order to understand the feelings of shame, humiliation, and pain, which his professional choice brought, because of inadequate income. I can still hear his words "I grew myself up to be a failure", which embodied the sacrifices he had made in order to be in a profession which he believes in and loves.

The image that these male teacher portrayed, is the exposed tip of the iceberg which Seifert, and Robinson (1981, 1988) investigated. The literature did not deal with the image of male teachers, which portrayed the male teachers as potential child abusers, homosexuals, pedophile, and racists. The informants portrayed the severe damage, child abuse cases have wrought upon the possibility of change in the image of the male teacher. Upon these deep fears we, as educators, must focus our attention. It is with these destructive suspicions, that we have to deal. It is our duty to expose them in all of their malice, and to make them obsolete, by our work of exposure, analysis, and education.

The present results of the research are consonant with Skeen et al, in that the male teachers have been encouraged by the female teachers who have known them. The research, plus Skeen et al's main findings, point to an encouraging phenomenon: the closer people get to male teachers, the less stereotyped they become, which is probably true with any unknown group. The research tends to question the implication made by Skeen et al, that female teachers reject male teachers. The informants reported being honestly welcomed by female teachers, and their tensions with female teachers, were as a rule, based on a professional level (1).

The present research does not agree with Robinson (1979), which reported males' conflicts with female teachers because of their maleness. It is not that such frictions were not reported by the informants, but that the informants made it clear that the conflicts were based on professional grounds, or occurred as a result of personality clashes. The reports of tensions because of gender, composed a minority of the incidents mentioned, and were marked out as exceptional. The working relationships were described, generally speaking, as good, with great appreciation and respect for female teachers and directors.

Behavior in Class and Personality

The present research does not agree with Robinson and Canaday (1978) or Wolinsky (1974), about the male teachers' activities in class. The teachers pointed out over and again, that what counted were not the activities, but the different way in which the

---

1. This is one of the points which merits investigation, because we have only a suggestion of rejection on one side, and a report of acceptance on the other side.

activities were perceived by the children. The teachers pointed out, that they had noticed the different interaction the children had with them vs. the interaction they had with female teachers. Pleck (1974, pp.164-165) points out the questionable M-F (Masculinity - Femininity) scales which are common in research, including Robinson & Canaday (1978), and Wolinsky (1974).

> ... M-F scales have proved of little value because M-F is not unidimensional. It includes different components - emotional qualities, interests, habits, and abilities - that have little empirical relationship with each other. Further, different M-F scales in popular use show only low positive correlations among themselves.

We should, therefore, bear in mind, that every value judgement about the M-F of activities, is questionable, and needs close examination. The informants avoided the issue of value judgement of M-F, and focused, instead, on the children's perceptions of the activities, and the children's interaction with them, vs. the female teachers.

The present research is in agreement with Robinson & Canaday (1978) and Wolinsky (1974), about the moderation of male teachers' behavior in class, according to the female teachers' model. The informants reported the same reasons for the moderation which are reported in the above researches, namely, sex role adaptation, and moderation of behavior because of the nature of work with young children . This moderation was specifically mentioned in regard with physical activity. At the beginning, the male teachers tended to be more rough with the children, and to encourage their running around. But, the teachers learned, because of safety considerations, to moderate the physical activity, and to be more aware of its structure. This was done to avoid children's behavior getting out of control, and to reduce physical injuries (1).

The research agrees with Robinson (1978, 1979) about the personality traits of the male teachers. Altruism and strong inclination to work in social related professions, were among the main traits found. The research agrees with Robinson's (1979) description of the male teachers as intrinsically motivated and unmaterialistic.

The research agrees with Robinson (1979) about the effects of financial difficulties. Although the present informants did not leave teaching, they (like Robinson's informants) changed their place of work because of financial difficulties and the inability to advance.

The informants in the present study, just like their predecessors in Robinson (1978), expressed their wish to break stereotypes, and to show the children that men can be warm, sensitive, and nurturant.

Jeff reported about the girls he encouraged to learn science. His description fits exactly into Pleck's (1987) discussion about School Feminization

---

1. Even Jeff, the most "masculine" of the informants, moderated his behavior. This could be seen, among others, in his team work with his co-teachers, and in the gentle gradual way, in which he slowly approached the youngest students in his group.

> "Most of the studies of the effect of the sex of the teacher on student performance examine only boys' performance, as if this were the only grounds on which to decide whether to increase the proportion of male teachers"
> (Pleck, 1987, p.126)

The two reports, Jeff's, and Pleck's, point to the following direction as possible. Our attention with regard to the issue of male teachers, should focus on two main perspectives. The first is the differences the male teachers' presence makes, for the child; the second is the difference it makes, for the male teacher who wants to teach in Early Childhood Education.

The present study has focused mainly on the second perspective. It is quite clear from the present research, that men who find in themselves the urge to teach young children, are banned financially and socially from the field. Only a few determined, unmaterialistic, and individualistic male teachers, have enough strength to deal with the continuous obstacles in front of them. The majority of males, probably never even dare to try. The ones who really lose out are primarily the males and the children who miss them.

V. Summary

When I set forth to conduct the research, I had no idea that it would be so compelling and fascinating. Like Spradley, who had started one of his researches with one supposition, and concluded it with another, I had started the research with one notion and concluded with a new unexpected knowledge. I found that, at least in the five situations reported here, the tensions between male and female teachers were gender oriented only in a small number of cases. The attitude that prevailed, was of acceptance and mutual respect. This was a very encouraging finding, since I personally had a different experience.

The second encouraging finding was that I was not alone. The informants' reports echoed my deepest respect for teaching young children, in order to make a difference.

The third finding was, that in spite of society's poor image, and the meager salaries, the male teachers proved to be strong, self assured people, who stubbornly stuck to their beliefs, and saw the teaching of young children as their natural and most satisfying choice of work.

When I got close to the end of the research, I could not help recalling over and again a sculpture by Picasso which I had seen two years ago in the Picasso Museum, in Paris. Picasso took the drop handlebars of bicycles, turned them over, and put them with their handles pointing upward, on a long pole. Picasso called it "A Bull", and for long minutes I was standing and looking at the miracle of transformation.

The five Male teachers I interviewed, had created, each in his own way, the same miracle. They entered a traditionally female role, gave it a new perspective, and suddenly the role changed, and gained a wonderful new dimension.

VI. Bibliography

Ayers, William, The Good Preschool Teacher, Teachers College Press, NY, 1989.

Bellow, Saul, Henderson the Rain King, Penguin Books, NY, NY, 1976.

Boressoff, Todd, Male Sex Roles - Stereotypes and Strategies for Change in the Early Childhood Classroom, Unpublished Thesis, Bank Street College of Education, NYC, 1977.

Bredekamp, Sue, (Ed.), Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8, NAEYC, Washington DC, 1989.

Dickens, Charles, Great Expectations, New American Library, NY, NY, 1963.

Gross, D., "Leadership in Infancy Settings: The Role of the infant/parent educator", in Selected Presentations by Dorothy W. Gross, NY, Bank Street College, pp.1-3, 1989.

Holland, J. L., Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Princton Hall, 1973.

Lee, P., & Wolinsky, A. Male Teachers of Young Children: A Preliminary Empirical Study, Young Children, 28, pp. 342-352, 1973.

Levine, James A., Redefining the Child Care "Problem" - Men as Child Nurturers, Childhood Education, pp.55-61, 11-12/1977.

Levinson, Daniel J., with Darrow, Charlotte N., Klein, Edward B., Levinson, Maria H., McKee, Braxton, The Seasons of a Man's Life, Alfred A. Knopf, NY 1978.

Milgram, Joel I., and Sciarra, Dorothy J., Male Preschool Teacher: The Realities of Acceptance, The Educational Forum, pp.245-247, January, 1974.

Pleck, Joseph H., The Myth of Masculinity, The MIT Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1987.

Pleck, Joseph H., Masculinity-Femininity Current and Alternative Paradigms, in Sex Roles, Vol. 1 No. 2 pp.161-178, 1975.

Robinson, Bryan E., & Canaday, Helen, Sex-Role Behaviors and Personality Traits of Male Day Care Teachers, Sex Roles, Vol. 4, No. 6, pp.853- 865, 1978.

Robinson, Bryan E., A Two Year Followup Study of Male and Female

Caregivers, Child Care Quarterly, 8 (4), Winter, pp.279-293, 1979.

Robinson, Bryan E., Changing Views on Male Early Childhood Teachers, Young Children, July 1981, pp.27-31.

Robinson, Bryan E., Vanishing Breed: Men In Child Care Programs, Young Children, September 1988, pp.54-58, 1988.

Seifert, Kevin, Getting Men to Teach Preschool, Contemporary Education, pp.299-304, 1979.

Skeen, Patsy, Robinson, B. E., Coleman, M., Gender Role Attitudes of Professional Female Educators Towards Men in Early Childhood Education, Psychological Reports, 59, pp.723-730, 1986.

Spradley, James P., The Ethnographic Interview, Holt, Reinehart and Winston, Inc., 1979.

Teti, D., & Lamb, M., Sex role learning and adolescent fatherhood, in Elster, Arthur B., & Lamb, Michael E, (Eds.) Adolescent Fatherhood, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillside, NJ, 1986.

Wolinsky, Annie Parham, Male and Female Teachers in Early Childhood Settings, Unpublished Report (Dissertation), Teachers College, Columbia University, NYC, 1974.

Appendix A

Dan's Biography

I was born in Haifa, the main port of Israel, in 1955. My late father was a police officer, eventually retired as a police general, and worked as the manager of the Jewish National Fund in Germany, Austria, and Northern Europe. My mother, already retired, was an insurance agent.

I have two half-brothers on my mother's side. One is fifty one years old, and the other, with whom I grew up most of my childhood, is 43 years old.

I went to a Day Care Center, from the time I was one until I was five years old. I probably did not like it, because I have almost no memories of this period. I loved the kindergarten to which I went for a year, when I was five years old. It was just across the street, had a huge playground between the pine trees, and a loving teacher who was our neighbor, and whose husband and son were our family friends.

When I was seven years old, we went to Adis Abeba, Ethiopia. My father was assigned to help establish a police academy. I was studying in an Israeli school and had the best time of my childhood. The period in Ethiopia had profound effect. It gave me an everlasting awareness of looking at reality from a different perspective.

In 1964, I came back to Israel and studied in Primary School until 1969. The school was warm, open and beloved. The shift to High School marked the beginning of adulthood. High School was cold, competitive and very demanding. It was regarded as one of the best in Israel, but when I graduated in 1973, with a major in Biology, I was pretty much indifferent to its reputation.

I was enlisted in 1973 and concluded my service as an officer in 1977. I went to Haifa University for two years and studied Education and Hebrew Literature. In 1979, I moved to Jerusalem, and studied Education and English Literature. I was a month from graduation, when the Lebanon war broke out in 1982. I fought in Lebanon and came back to resume my studies. The Lebanon war was a personal turning point. I found that I no longer had the patience to continue my studies. I was unable to read a book for years to come. I just could not concentrate.

In 1983, I worked for a year as a tutor in a boarding school. It was my second educational experience. When I was studying in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I did my internship, for a month, in the University Nursery School. I worked with two to three year olds. In the boarding school, I had my own group of twelve children, age thirteen to fourteen years old, (nine boys and three girls) who came from broken families. I was working part time, with a female tutor, who worked full time. We served as parental models for the group, and our work extended beyond working hours. It was an intense experience and it strengthened my feeling that if there is anything significant to be done in Education, it should be done in Early Childhood. In the other seven groups in school, we had children of mixed ages; the youngest being six and oldest being twelve years old .When I spoke with the tutors of the six year olds, they thought it was already too late for some of the children.

I left the boarding school by the end of 1983, and became an independent salesperson, and later on, a sales manager.

In 1988, I went to Tadmor, Israel's Central School of Hospitality, and trained as a pastry chef. I fell in love with the profession and still work whenever possible.

In 1989, I came to the USA to continue my studies in Education. I chose Early Childhood Education as my focal point, and intend to continue my studies in Educational Psychology.

A year and a half ago, I started working in a Day Care Center in Manhattan with 7-24 month olds. When I began to work, I had set aside the fact that I was the sole male teacher working with female teachers. Being 33 years old, and married for three years, I down played the significance of the special situation.

Six months later, I found myself out of the Day Care Center. A year had passed and I can still feel that kick in my behind. I had the strange feeling of floating on air, while walking in the street, with no children to attend to.

Two weeks after I left the Day Care Center, I started working in another one, a few blocks away. This time, I worked with older children, two to three, and three to four year olds. Once again, I was the only male teacher working with female teachers, but this time I stayed, and I am still working and enjoying my work.

The lesson I have learned is still studied, not only because I admit to being uncompromising with myself, but because like

Henderson, in Saul Bellow's Henderson the Rain King, I started thinking seriously (about the issue of male teachers), only after I had gotten a blow on the head.

When I was ready to admit it, I realized I had been rejected in the Day Care Center, partially because as a male I was a threat to my co-teacher; partially because I was a foreigner from Israel, and had different ideas about working with children; and partially because I was a novice in the field of working with infants and toddlers.

I am married to Tal, (an Economist by profession), for four years, and we live in Manhattan. When I am not busy producing papers I find relief in playing the electric guitar, composing, riding my bicycles, and keeping the professional edge in the kitchen.

Appendix B

The Submarine

J. For five years I've been building a model submarine. I'll give you another inside into my attitude and how I use it with kids.
D. Sure.
J. For five years I've been building a model submarine. The thing is seven foot long. All right.
D. Where is it?
J. I have it home. All right? Now, I've building this thing for five years, I'll work on it a month and not touch it for six, one of those deals. But when I was a child we grew up in New York City in the East Side, we used to go to Central Park in the summer, and swim in the sailboat lake.
D. Yeah.
J. There's a sailboat lake there. You're not allowed to swim in it, it's only made for sailboats, all right?
D. Yeah.
J. Now, there's a sailboat club in there, where a lot of old men used to have their five thousand dollars model yachts, and model sailboats, and they used to sail around in the sailboat.
D. Yeah.
J. And these were really handcrafted beautiful model boats.
D. Yeah.
J. And they used to have long bamboo poles that they used to use to push their boat away from the side of the pond, so their boat wouldn't crash in the cement.
D. Yeah.
J. But we, as little New York City kids, now this is the 1940's, you gotta remember. That late forties. We used to go there and would swim in there, and they could never catch us, because we would swim away from them.
D. Yeah (chuckling)
J. And the old men would be running around, you know, "Get out of that goddamned lake, you're gonna, you're gonna turn my boat over." We'd be splashing and we were... And they were right. We could make a wave and turn over a $500 sailboat. For god's sakes, I mean if they would sink to the bottom, "You'd ruin his life's work, I've been working on this for six years." Right. The man retires, he comes home every day, he builds this beautiful sailboat, and some little shit ass street kid is going to destroy it?!
D. Yeah.
J. So they used to chase us with their bamboo poles. They were long poles, we'd --- window, and sometimes they'd catch us and they'd chew our ass. They hurt us, they really hurt us. So I says I'm gonna get them bastards one day. So I came into some money, and I, this is just one of the things you want to do. I went and bought, I says I'm gonna buy a submarine, now this is

in my mind now "I'm gonna build this goddamn submarine, and I'm gonna go one morning early, and I'm gonna put the submarine in the water, and submerge it, and I'm gonna hide in the bushes with my radio controls, and I'm gonna wait for them old fuckers to come up there with their, with their boats, and then I'm gonna raise the submarine out of the pond, and then I'm gonna attack. Now I wanna look at these old guys faces when they're gonna see the seven foot submarine bearing down on their sailboat. You know, da da da da dada. All right. I had one guy, a friend of mine who was a film writer in California, so excited about this he made me put in writing that I would film it, I would call him up the day for that filming it, and he would have copyright for filming this thing and using it commercially, because he thought, he said it's going to be hysterical.

D. It's Candid Camera.

J. Right, you this little, you have this guy in the bushes, fifty year old guy in the bushes outliving his childhood dream. He is getting his revenge, his childhood revenge on these old men. You know, that's how mind works. So if you have humor, a sense of humor, you could incorporate your sense of humor with the children and make it work.

D. You haven't did, you never did this project?

J. I haven't finished the boat. The boat is still being worked, and it probably will be another three or four years, but, I'm not, I'm one of these sort of people, I'm, you know, revenge is best served cold. Yeah, so I'll get my revenge.